

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

JULY 3RD. When the dinner hour brought us together again, Count Fosco was in his usual excellent spirits. He exerted himself to interest and amuse us, as if he was determined to efface from our memories all recollection of what had passed in the library that afternoon. Lively descriptions of his adventures in travelling; amusing anecdotes of remarkable people whom he had met with abroad; quaint comparisons between the social customs of various nations, illustrated by examples drawn from men and women indiscriminately all over Europe; humorous confessions of the innocent follies of his own early life, when he ruled the fashions of a second-rate Italian town, and wrote preposterous romances, on the French model, for a second-rate Italian newspaper—all flowed in succession so easily and so gaily from his lips, and all addressed our various curiosities and various interests so directly and so delicately, that Laura and I listened to him with as much attention, and, inconsistent as it may seem, with as much admiration also, as Madame Fosco herself. Women can resist a man's love, a man's fame, a man's personal appearance, and a man's money; but they cannot resist a man's tongue, when he knows how to talk to them.

After dinner, while the favourable impression which he had produced on us was still vivid in our minds, the Count modestly withdrew to read in the library. Laura proposed a stroll in the grounds to enjoy the close of the long evening. It was necessary, in common politeness, to ask Madame Fosco to join us; but, this time, she had apparently received her orders beforehand, and she begged we would kindly excuse her. "The Count will probably want a fresh supply of cigarettes," she remarked, by way of apology; "and nobody can make them to his satisfaction, but myself." Her cold blue eyes almost warmed as she spoke the words—she looked actually proud of being the officiating medium through which her lord and master composed himself with tobacco-smoke!

Laura and I went out together alone.

It was a misty, heavy evening. There was a sense of blight in the air; the flowers were drooping in the garden, and the ground was parched and dewless. The western heaven, as

we saw it over the quiet trees, was of a pale yellow hue, and the sun was setting faintly in a haze. Coming rain seemed near: it would fall probably with the fall of night.

"Which way shall we go?" I asked.

"Towards the lake, Marian, if you like," she answered.

"You seem unaccountably fond, Laura, of that dismal lake."

"No; not of the lake, but of the scenery about it. The sand and heath, and the fir-trees, are the only objects I can discover, in all this large place, to remind me of Limmeridge. But we will walk in some other direction, if you prefer it."

"I have no favourite walks at Blackwater Park, my love. One is the same as another to me. Let us go to the lake—we may find it cooler in the open space than we find it here."

We walked through the shadowy plantation in silence. The heaviness in the evening air oppressed us both; and, when we reached the boat-house, we were glad to sit down and rest, inside.

A white fog hung low over the lake. The dense brown line of the trees on the opposite bank, appeared above it, like a dwarf forest floating in the sky. The sandy ground, shelving downward from where we sat, was lost mysteriously in the outward layers of the fog. The silence was horrible. No rustling of the leaves—no bird's note in the wood—no cry of water-fowl from the pools of the hidden lake. Even the croaking of the frogs had ceased to-night.

"It is very desolate and gloomy," said Laura. "But we can be more alone here than anywhere else."

She spoke quietly, and looked at the wilderness of sand and mist with steady, thoughtful eyes. I could see that her mind was too much occupied with its own thoughts to feel the dreary impressions from without, which had fastened themselves already on mine.

"I promised, Marian, to tell you the truth about my married life, instead of leaving you any longer to guess it for yourself," she began. "That secret is the first I have ever had from you, love, and I am determined it shall be the last. I was silent, as you know, for your sake—and perhaps a little for my own sake as well. It is very hard for a woman to confess that the man to whom she has given her whole life, is

the man of all others who cares least for the gift. If you were married yourself, Marian—and especially if you were happily married—you would feel for me as no single woman *can* feel, however kind and true she may be."

What answer could I make? I could only take her hand, and look at her with my whole heart, as well as my eyes would let me.

"How often," she went on, "I have heard you laughing over what you used to call your 'poverty'! how often you have made me mock-speeches of congratulation on my wealth! Oh, Marian, never laugh again. Thank God for your poverty—it has made you your own mistress, and has saved you from the lot that has fallen on me."

A sad beginning on the lips of a young wife!—sad, in its quiet, plain-spoken truth. The few days we had all passed together at Blackwater Park, had been many enough to show me—to show any one—that her husband had married her for.

"You shall not be distressed," she said, "by hearing how soon my disappointments and my trials began—or, even by knowing what they were. It is bad enough to have them on my memory. If I tell you how he received the first, and last, attempt at remonstrance that I ever made, you will know how he has always treated me, as well as if I had described it in so many words. It was one day at Rome, when we had ridden out together to the tomb of Cecilia Metella. The sky was calm and lovely—and the grand old ruin looked beautiful—and the remembrance that a husband's love had raised it in the old time to a wife's memory, made me feel more tenderly and more anxiously towards my husband than I had ever felt yet. 'Would you build such a tomb for me, Percival?' I asked him. 'You said you loved me dearly, before we were married; and yet, since that time——' I could get no farther. Marian! he was not even looking at me! I pulled down my veil, thinking it best not to let him see that the tears were in my eyes. I fancied he had not paid any attention to me; but he had. He said, 'Come away,' and laughed to himself, as he helped me on to my horse. He mounted his own horse; and laughed again, as we rode away. 'If I do build you a tomb,' he said, 'it will be done with your own money. I wonder whether Cecilia Metella had a fortune, and paid for hers.' I made no reply—how could I, when I was crying behind my veil? 'Ah, you light-complexioned women are all sulky,' he said. 'What do you want? compliments and soft speeches? Well! I'm in a good humour this morning. Consider the compliments paid, and the speeches said.' Men little know, when they say hard things to us, how well we remember them, and how much harm they do us. It would have been better for me if I had gone on crying; but his contempt dried up my tears, and hardened my heart. From that time, Marian, I never checked myself again in thinking of Walter Hartright. I let the memory of those happy days, when we were so fond of each other in secret, come back,

and comfort me. What else had I to look to for consolation? If we had been together, you would have helped me to better things. I know it was wrong, darling—but tell me if I was wrong, without any excuse."

I was obliged to turn my face from her. "Don't ask me!" I said. "Have I suffered as you have suffered? What right have I to decide?"

"I used to think of him," she pursued, dropping her voice, and moving closer to me—"I used to think of him, when Percival left me alone at night, to go among the Opera people. I used to fancy what I might have been, if it had pleased God to bless me with poverty, and if I had been his wife. I used to see myself in my neat cheap gown, sitting at home and waiting for him, while he was earning our bread—sitting at home and working for him, and loving him all the better because I *had* to work for him—seeing him come in tired, and taking off his hat and coat for him—and, Marian, pleasing him with little dishes at dinner that I had learnt to make for his sake.—Oh! I hope he is never lonely enough and sad enough to think of me, and see me, as I have thought of him and seen him!"

As she said those melancholy words, all the lost tenderness returned to her voice, and all the lost beauty trembled back into her face. Her eyes rested as lovingly on the blighted, solitary, ill-omened view before us, as if they saw the friendly hills of Cumberland in the dim and threatening sky.

"Don't speak of Walter any more," I said, as soon as I could control myself. "Oh, Laura, spare us both the wretchedness of talking of him, now!"

She roused herself, and looked at me tenderly.

"I would rather be silent about him for ever," she answered, "than cause you a moment's pain."

"It is in your interests," I pleaded; "it is for your sake that I speak. If your husband heard you——"

"It would not surprise him, if he did hear me."

She made that strange reply with a weary calmness and coldness. The change in her manner, when she gave the answer, startled me almost as much as the answer itself.

"Not surprise him!" I repeated. "Laura! remember what you are saying—you frighten me!"

"It is true," she said—"it is what I wanted to tell you to-day, when we were talking in your room. My only secret when I opened my heart to him at Limmeridge, was a harmless secret, Marian—you said so yourself. The name was all I kept from him—and he has discovered it."

I heard her; but I could say nothing. Her last words had killed the little hope that still lived in me.

"It happened at Rome," she went on, as wearily calm and cold as ever. "We were at a

little party, given to the English by some friends of Sir Percival's—Mr. and Mrs. Markland. Mrs. Markland had the reputation of sketching very beautifully; and some of the guests prevailed on her to show us her drawings. We all admired them—but something I said attracted her attention particularly to me. 'Surely you draw yourself?' she asked. 'I used to draw a little once,' I answered, 'but I have given it up.' 'If you have once drawn,' she said, 'you may take to it again one of these days; and, if you do, I wish you would let me recommend you a master.' I said nothing—you know why, Marian—and tried to change the conversation. But Mrs. Markland persisted. 'I have had all sorts of teachers,' she went on; 'but the best of all, the most intelligent and the most attentive, was a Mr. Hartright. If you ever take up your drawing again, do try him as a master. He is a young man—modest and gentleman-like—I am sure you will like him.' Think of those words being spoken to me publicly, in the presence of strangers—strangers who had been invited to meet the bride and bridegroom! I did all I could to control myself—I said nothing, and looked down close at the drawings. When I ventured to raise my head again, my eyes and my husband's eyes met; and I knew, by his look, that my face had betrayed me. 'We will see about Mr. Hartright,' he said, looking at me all the time, 'when we get back to England. I agree with you, Mrs. Markland—I think Lady Glyde is sure to like him.' He laid an emphasis on the last words which made my cheeks burn, and set my heart beating as if it would stifle me. Nothing more was said—we came away early. He was silent in the carriage, driving back to the hotel. He helped me out, and followed me up-stairs as usual. But the moment we were in the drawing-room, he locked the door, pushed me down into a chair, and stood over me with his hands on my shoulders. 'Ever since that morning when you made your audacious confession to me at Limmeridge,' he said, 'I have wanted to find out the man; and I found him in your face, to-night. Your drawing-master was the man; and his name is Hartright. You shall repent it, and he shall repent it, to the last hour of your lives. Now go to bed, and dream of him, if you like—with the marks of my horsewhip on his shoulders.' Whenever he is angry with me, now, he refers to what I acknowledged to him in your presence, with a sneer or a threat. I have no power to prevent him from putting his own horrible construction on the confidence I placed in him. I have no influence to make him believe me, or to keep him silent. You looked surprised, to-day, when you heard him tell me that I had made a virtue of necessity in marrying him. You will not be surprised again, when you hear him repeat it, the next time he is out of temper—Oh, Marian! don't! don't! you hurt me!"

I had caught her in my arms; and the sting and torment of my remorse had closed them round her like a vice. Yes! my remorse. The

white despair of Walter's face, when my cruel words struck him to the heart in the summer-house at Limmeridge, rose before me in mute, unendurable reproach. My hand had pointed the way which led the man my sister loved, step by step, far from his country and his friends. Between those two young hearts I had stood, to sunder them for ever, the one from the other—and his life and her life lay wasted before me, alike, in witness of the deed. I had done this and done it for Sir Percival Glyde.

For Sir Percival Glyde.

I heard her speaking, and I knew by the tone of her voice that she was comforting me—I, who deserved nothing but the reproach of her silence! How long it was before I mastered the absorbing misery of my own thoughts, I cannot tell. I was first conscious that she was kissing me; and then my eyes seemed to wake on a sudden to their sense of outward things, and I knew that I was looking mechanically straight before me at the prospect of the lake.

"It is late," I heard her whisper. "It will be dark in the plantation." She shook my arm, and repeated, "Marian! it will be dark in the plantation."

"Give me a minute longer," I said—"a minute, to get better in."

I was afraid to trust myself to look at her yet; and I kept my eyes fixed on the view.

It *was* late. The dense brown line of trees in the sky had faded in the gathering darkness, to the faint resemblance of a long wreath of smoke. The mist over the lake below had stealthily enlarged, and advanced on us. The silence was as breathless as ever—but the horror of it had gone, and the solemn mystery of its stillness was all that remained.

"We are far from the house," she whispered. "Let us go back."

She stopped suddenly and turned her face from me towards the entrance of the boat-house.

"Marian!" she said, trembling violently.

"Do you see nothing? Look!"

"Where?"

"Down there, below us."

She pointed. My eyes followed her hand; and I saw it, too.

A living figure was moving over the waste of heath in the distance. It crossed our range of view from the boat-house, and passed darkly along the outer edge of the mist. It stopped, far off, in front of us—waited—and passed on; moving slowly, with the white cloud of mist behind it and above it—slowly, slowly, till it glided by the edge of the boat-house, and we saw it no more.

We were both unnerved by what had passed between us that evening. Some minutes elapsed before Laura would venture into the plantation, and before I could make up my mind to lead her back to the house.

"Was it a man, or a woman?" she asked, in a whisper, as we moved, at last, into the dark dampness of the outer air.

"I am not certain."

"Which do you think?"

"It looks like a woman."

"I was afraid it was a man in a long cloak."

"It may be a man. In this dim light it is not possible to be certain."

"Wait, Marian! I'm frightened—I don't see the path. Suppose the figure should follow us?"

"Not at all likely, Laura. There is really nothing to be alarmed about. The shores of the lake are not far from the village, and they are free to any one to walk on, by day or night. It is only wonderful we have seen no living creature there before."

We were now in the plantation. It was very dark—so dark, that we found some difficulty in keeping the path. I gave Laura my arm, and we walked as fast as we could on our way back.

Before we were half way through, she stopped, and forced me to stop with her. She was listening.

"Hush!" she whispered. "I hear something behind us."

"Dead leaves," I said, to cheer her, "or a twig blown off the trees."

"It is summer time, Marian; and there is not a breath of wind. Listen!"

I heard the sound, too—a sound like a light footstep following us.

"No matter who it is, or what it is," I said; "let us walk on. In another minute, if there is anything to alarm us, we shall be near enough to the house to be heard."

We went on quickly—so quickly, that Laura was breathless by the time we were nearly through the plantation, and within sight of the lighted windows.

I waited a moment, to give her breathing-time. Just as we were about to proceed, she stopped me again, and signed to me with her hand to listen once more. We both heard distinctly a long, heavy sigh, behind us, in the black depths of the trees.

"Who's there?" I called out.

There was no answer.

"Who's there?" I repeated.

An instant of silence followed; and then we heard the light fall of the footsteps again, fainter and fainter—sinking away into the darkness—sinking, sinking, sinking—till they were lost in the silence.

We hurried out from the trees to the open lawn beyond; crossed it rapidly; and without another word passing between us, reached the house.

In the light of the hall-lamp, Laura looked at me, with white cheeks and startled eyes.

"I am half dead with fear," she said. "Who could it have been?"

"We will try to guess to-morrow," I replied.

"In the mean time, say nothing to any one of what we have heard and seen."

"Why not?"

"Because silence is safe—and we have need of safety in this house."

I sent Laura up-stairs immediately—waited a minute to take off my hat, and put my hair smooth—and then went at once to make my

first investigations in the library, on pretence of searching for a book.

There sat the Count, filling out the largest easy-chair in the house; smoking and reading calmly, with his feet on an ottoman, his cravat across his knees, and his shirt collar wide open. And there sat Madame Fosco, like a quiet child, on a stool by his side, making cigarettes. Neither husband nor wife could, by any possibility, have been out late that evening, and have just got back to the house in a hurry. I felt that my object in visiting the library was answered the moment I set eyes on them.

Count Fosco rose in polite confusion, and tied his cravat on, when I entered the room.

"Pray don't let me disturb you," I said. "I have only come here to get a book."

"All unfortunate men of my size suffer from the heat," said the Count, refreshing himself gravely with a large green fan. "I wish I could change places with my excellent wife. She is as cool, at this moment, as a fish in the pond outside."

The Countess allowed herself to thaw under the influence of her husband's quaint comparison. "I am never warm, Miss Halcombe," she remarked, with the modest air of a woman who was confessing to one of her own merits.

"Have you and Lady Glyde been out this evening?" asked the Count, while I was taking a book from the shelves, to preserve appearances.

"Yes; we went out to get a little air."

"May I ask in what direction?"

"In the direction of the lake—as far as the boat-house."

"Aha? As far as the boat-house?"

Under other circumstances, I might have resented his curiosity. But, to-night I hailed it as another proof that neither he nor his wife were connected with the mysterious appearance at the lake.

"No more adventures, I suppose, this evening?" he went on. "No more discoveries, like your discovery of the wounded dog?"

He fixed his unfathomable grey eyes on me, with that cold, clear, irresistible glitter in them, which always forces me to look at him, and always makes me uneasy, while I do look. An unutterable suspicion that his mind is prying into mine, overcomes me at these times; and it overcame me now.

"No," I said, shortly; "no adventures—no discoveries."

I tried to look away from him, and leave the room. Strange as it seems, I hardly think I should have succeeded in the attempt, if Madame Fosco had not helped me by causing him to move and look away first.

"Count, you are keeping Miss Halcombe standing," she said.

The moment he turned round to get me a chair, I seized my opportunity—thanked him—made my excuses—and slipped out.

An hour later, when Laura's maid happened to be in her mistress's room, I took occasion to refer to the closeness of the night, with a view

to ascertaining next how the servants had been passing their time.

"Have you been suffering much from the heat, down stairs?" I asked.

"No, miss," said the girl; "we have not felt it to speak of."

"You have been out in the woods, then, I suppose?"

"Some of us thought of going, miss. But cook said she should take her chair into the cool court-yard, outside the kitchen door; and, on second thoughts, all the rest of us took our chairs out there, too."

The housekeeper was now the only person who remained to be accounted for.

"Is Mrs. Michelson gone to bed yet?" I inquired.

"I should think not, miss," said the girl, smiling. "Mrs. Michelson is more likely to be getting up, just now, than going to bed."

"Why? What do you mean? Has Mrs. Michelson been taking to her bed in the day-time?"

"No, miss; not exactly, but the next thing to it. She's been asleep all the evening, on the sofa in her own room."

Putting together what I observed for myself in the library and what I have just heard from Laura's maid, one conclusion seems inevitable. The figure we saw at the lake, was not the figure of Madame Fosco, of her husband, or of any of the servants. The footsteps we heard behind us, were not the footsteps of any one belonging to the house.

Who could it have been?

It seems useless to inquire. I cannot even decide whether the figure was a man's or a woman's. I can only say that I think it was a woman's.

THE BAZAARS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE word *bazaar* came to us from the Magi's country, and the English bazaar in its shape and character and purpose, is Eastern from top to toe. In Stamboul as in London, a bazaar means an arcaded covered walk, lined on either side with shops. To convey the character of the Turkish bazaar as definitely as I could to an Englishman, or a Londoner—which is the same thing a little narrowed—I should describe it as in build not unlike a metropolitan arcade, with the shop fronts taken off, the shops themselves narrowed into open-air cobblers' stalls, and piled round with bales of goods, in the centre of which sits the bearded Turks who own them. The bazaar of Turkey has nothing in common, however, with such places as the Pantheon in Oxford-street, London, except that, like that, it is a cluster of shops, collected under one all-embracing roof: there intended to keep out the sun, here to keep the rain out.

The bazaars are also unlike ours in this, that they are divided into districts or parishes of trades; the jewellers keep far from the armourers, the silk merchants from the henna

sellers, the fez makers from the slipper vendors. The same practice of guild subdivision extends even outside the gates of the bazaar, for, now you find yourself deafened by the clattering violence of the coppersmiths' street, and now you stroll into a district of clog-makers or confectioners.

I hardly know what originated this old Eastern custom. It must have been of early origin, for, looking back on England, one finds that Saxon-London had its Bread and Milk streets, its Corn hill, and its Fish street—"birds of a feather." We suppose early advantages of propinquity and aid, and, above all, the mediæval necessities and jealous secrets of guild association, sent our Jews to Old Jewry, our clothemen to Holywell-street, our money-lenders to Lombard-street, our clothiers to Watling-street, our butchers to Newgate-street, and our weavers to Spitalfields. In large cities, this classification makes shopping more easy, and in troubled times of Janissary revolt, bales of silk, Persian sapphires, and such valuables, were scarcely ever safe outside the iron gates of the bazaar.

But let us get out of the intolerable sun and off the laming street, and enter the bazaar: round which a perfect irregular cavalry regiment of hack Turkish horses and their impudent boy grooms are clustered, with some ugly veiled women, some blacks, a Hindoo fakir, an Arab, half a dozen Greeks, an Armenian, and some black slaves, who, to judge by their great boxfuls of white teeth, are in a condition to laugh at dentists for many a long masticating year.

A low stone archway, the cumbrous iron doors now flung back, admits us to the busy labyrinthine world of the bazaars—quite a small city of shops, with streets crossing and recrossing, with fountains, coffee-shops, street vendors of its own. Stop here a day, and you will see all the routine of Turkish life gone through: periodical prayer, religious ablutions, buying, selling, love-making, quarrels, thieving, eating. To many hundred Turks these walls are all they ever see of the world. One day a death spasm will seize them, they will turn pale and die, and the next night be run off with to the place of cypresses and forgotten; the day after, a new beard and pipe will reign over the little open shop. So the wheel spins round.

Before I go and buy a handful of pearl seed, a jaunty fez, a Persian pen-case, or aloes wood to fume in my chibouk, let me warn the reader against thinking that all here is cloth of gold and silver, or that "gemmed daggers" and "jewelled hilts" strew the ground, or that the pearls are in sacks, or the diamonds in pailfuls, as some dazzled travellers of thirty years ago describe the place. Why, the great bossy gold cups and gigantic salvers of a London jeweller's window would outshine all you see in a Turkish bazaar put together. I suppose the false glamour that Byron threw over Eastern wealth gives rise to the tone in which Englishmen get in the habit of talking of everything Oriental. What delighted me in the bazaars was not the splendour of the merchandise, but rather the unusual aspect of everything,

and the quiet, simple, out-of-door life which these laggards in the race of civilisation lead.

Let me describe a single street in the chief bazaar, and it will, in its general features, stand for all streets: though the arms bazaar is more mediæval, and the drug bazaar with its dim lights and horse-shoe entrance, more intensely Oriental. But I take the Bezestein and its Slipper street because it is Eastern without being exceptional. My street is a plain vaulted tunnel, lighted by small side apertures, its roof is everywhere white-washed, and round the small dungeon-like windows meanders a thready pattern of blue flowers. This is all the ornament. Below, on either side the avenue, run the shops, each shop with its two yards or so wide of counter show-room, and behind, a little inner room for richer goods, entered by a low stone arch, which gives it a dog-kennel look. In and out of this, works a little handsome fat Armenian shop-boy, dragging out bales of poniards, silk purses in heaps, embroidered handkerchiefs, Syrian scarfs, inlaid boxes, or sequin bracelets. But the master sits brooding, and never rises except in the moment's excitement preceding the visitor making the purchase or departing in peace. Between the banks of shops, runs the uneven earth floor of the street, with the slinking wild dogs foraging with their usual idle pertinacity. On the low counters in the next street, breast high in spongy Broussa bath towels, striped silks white and rose colour, bales of Manchester prints brown and purple, sit the Turks, cross-legged, pipe in mouth, slippers parallel before them. But here we have all slippers, and among these stands a lean nimble Greek boy, haranguing on the merits of a pair, fit for a sultana, that he holds on his hands like gloves. They are very dainty—so small that only a fairy queen could wear them, had they heels—and are made of pink and blue satin, starred and banded with seed pearl, in a manner fit for the fair Persian.

"Bono Johnny!" he calls out as he sees a Frank pass, and the words are echoed by a Jew tout, who runs to my elbow; but when he sees I disregard his stacks of yellow leather (canary colour) boots, heavy red slippers, and patent leather shoes, and that I bear towards Zenope's shop, the Armenian general store, he slaps one slipper in the other, and calls out after me in a noisy, taunting, irritating voice:

"Bad man, Zenope, cheat man; no good, no bono, Zenope—you lose piastre—ah, you Johnny! Yah! Allah!" and upon turning round to hear if he has anything more to tell me, I obstruct the road for two Turkish women, who at once slap me in a petulant contemptuous way, and growl out something about "infidel," which I bear patiently, partly from prudential reasons, partly from remembering the gallant Spanish proverb, "White hands do not hurt"—though this hardly applies, for, looking again through their shroud-like yashmaks, I see they are Abyssinian negresses, with the usual blubber lips and scoloped right cheek. At all these slipper shops, among gorgeous slippers sewn with gold thread or spangles, and fringed with silver tissue, I see

everywhere that loose patent leather overshoe which the Turkish gentleman generally wears to slip off at the mosque door.

I pass a marble tank, into which falls a broad silvery web of musical water, and turning down a cross street, find myself at Zenope's. I know the shop, because a little signboard with that Eastern name on it hangs across the street, and also because three fox-eyed Jew touters who have been hanging on my skirts denouncing my certain ruin, now call out with one voice:

"Zenope bono—all good, Zenope; Englishmen all buy Zenope—beads, slippers, daggers—everything Zenope." Indeed, there is no time to retreat, for Zenope, a sleek, short, well-to-do-looking Armenian, with the deep rich darkness in his eye that Armenians have, comes forward, bowing and asking me to enter in the European manner, plus a little not unpleasant Oriental abjectness. No cross-legged Turk here—in fact, no out-of-door display—but only a little well of a room, lighted from the top, and hung with silk robes, camel's-hair cloaks, and trophies of amber-coloured shields, and Janissary maces. No couch to lie on here, no pipes, no touching of breast and brow, for Zenope is as bland and dignified as the richest shopkeeper in Bond-street. He claps his hands—one of my gang of Jews comes smiling in from the outside. He rolls me up two cigarettes in a moment, and praises something he sees my eye resting on. Zenope whispers him—he flies for lemonade. If I were at a Turkish shop, this my friend Haaman, or Lazarus, would interpret, and gain a handsome per-centage; here, too, he will have the per-centage, but he has no need to interpret. Zenope knows I have come chiefly to look at things, and tries to find out my weaknesses. From what I ask about at this first visit, he will lay traps for me twenty visits hence. He lets me have, he says, small things, such as perfumes, &c., for nothing to-day, because he knows I am a rich English effendi, who will go home laden with presents, and because I shall return to-night to Misseri's and tell gentlemen how cheap everything at Zenope's is.

Then, he takes down from the wall, and out of nooks and pigeon-holes, and off shelves, all sorts of rubbish in the worst condition. He takes down an Arab haik of black camel's hair, with rich gold-thread embroideries over the shoulders and hood, which he recommends as indestructible for travelling; he streams out before me coarse ruggy Persian shawls (reds, blues, and yellows), and looking always as if they were turned on the wrong side; he drags out, and dusts with solemn care, cracked old tea-caddies inlaid with chessboard patterns of mother-of-pearl, so old and dry that the lozenge flakes are half loose; he unhooks rusty maces and paltry poniards with clumsy carved handles; he tires me with sequin bracelets, and beautiful twists of silver wire such as the Sinope people have manufactured for generations; he makes me smell the best Albanian otto of roses, and flourishes about great rattlesnake bunches of

sandal-wood rosaries such as are used by dervish and monk; he then, in despair, routs out wooden Persian pen-cases, painted with stag-hunts, and combats, and amorous scenes from the poets, straw-plaited cigar-cases, gilt pastille-burners, and rose-water sprinklers; but I shoulder away all, and buy only some jasmine pipe-stalks, some gold tissue for slippers, and some sequin bracelets: Zenope all the time looking deeply depressed at the low prices he pretends I exact and grind from him. If he smile, he smiles ruefully and with an effort, but I suppose when I am well out of the door he makes up for it. At all events, he will revenge his wrongs on Rocket, who is planning the purchase of an Oriental dressing-gown—for I don't know how many hundred piastres—besides a prayer-carpet of great value, and an ivory chest of Indian work. I observe that everything costs Zenope the Armenian more than he sells it for, and yet that whatever you talk of buying outside—mouthpieces, slippers, fez, or turban—he seems to wish to be the scapegoat of, and to buy for you.

I tear myself from Zenope: two Jew touts fighting about their claims to me just outside his shop: and turn down a cross street to the right and enter the jewellers' bazaar, which shuts at three or four o'clock. The stalls in this quarter differ from those in the other villages of this great Tyre and Sidon under cover. They are not small banked up platforms, with a dog-kennel door behind and shelves all round for goods, but they are small bins, looking like cumbrous pews, or heavy timber sofas, or four-post bedsteads cut down into enclosures. One would think that the Jews who watch you from them expected a rush of turbaned men some day at the diamonds hidden away inside, in chests and trebly-locked drawers. Not that there is much visible: nothing but a few upright glass-cases such as country dealers keep lollypops in, of coarse cornelian signet rings, and turquoise earrings, and little talisman triangular gold plates, and a few ill-set brilliants. Though emeralds are the fashion just at present with those rather whimsical beauties the Turkish ladies, I saw none on show except two or three that looked like fragments of chemists' bottles. The emerald, with the essence of eternal spring in its heart—rubies, with undying fire at their cores—opals, with the dawn breaking their mist, yet never piercing quite through—were here, I knew, somewhere, up those sly fellows' loose jugglers' sleeves, or in the centre of those carved cut down bedsteads, but see them I could not. Indeed, the attention of the Shylock merchants seemed entirely taken up by some itinerant, ragged-robed peripatetics, who, holding high over their heads amber mouthpieces filleted with "sparklers," as the English cracksman affectionately calls diamonds, or large, round, embossed silver vessels like metal melons—used, I believe, to contain sweetmeats, or trifle, or syllabub, or Beelzebub knows what—kept pacing through the rows of chattering cross-legged dealers, shouting some imaginary bidding as "Yetnish,"

"Elli," in screeching tones, most vociferous, most intolerable. These stray dealers, whose whole capital had, I suppose, been expended in the saffron mouthpiece or the rough silver melon, seldom obtained any attention, except now and then a robed arm, right or left from either side of the street they threaded, snatched from them the melon or the mouthpiece, and then pushed it back scornfully into the violent talker's hand, at the same time repeating a number very low down in the scale of numerals.

These brokers seem to itinerate the bazaars all day long from prayer to prayer; now with a belt full of pistols, now with an armful of Persian books, now with a sheaf of chibouk stalks, now flourishing a tinny-looking yataghan, now waving a tobe, now making great play with an ambery rhinoceros-hide target, bossed with brass, from Abyssinia. I looked for some time at a Turk at the entrance of the bazaar winnowing a pile of seed pearl, and at another shaking loose diamond sparks about in a drawer. I looked at cameos, and at one little stray oval of Wedgewood's, which the dealer evidently mistook for some Greek work of alarming value. I stayed for a moment to see an engraver working a little lathe with a sort of fiddlestick, while he gouged delicately at the cornelian signet. Presently, before one of the stalls, a Turkish lady, blooming with rouge, came and sat down, and began to cheapen some silver bracelets, upon which her black, motherly-looking duenna frowned me away to the Arms bazaar, where I was bound. Now, as only a day before, Rocket and Windybank had heard a shopkeeper in the bazaars threatened by soldiers for selling to an infidel muslin handkerchiefs with the "Mashallah" embroidered at the corners, I thought I had better go when I saw the shopkeeper's eye turned uncomfortably on me.

The Arms bazaar is dim and eastern, and lighted by dark glass eyes high over head. The first stall you come to, is perhaps a Persian's; he sits moodily among a row of broad poniards and Korans. He is reading. He shows you at your request several daggers, some with handles of agate or of a certain opaque green stone not unlike marble. He brings out a little bit of steel, like an English table-knife, on which he sets fabulous value. He has broad double-edged knives, tapering to a point and grooved down the middle; others, with tinselled handles, worth hundreds of piastres. You begin to get afraid that the solemn man in the black retreating cap is a cheat, all the worse for being plausible, when he suddenly frowns, as if he had discovered that your views of cheap and dear were unworthy of any one, but an infidel, and replaces all the daggers against the wall, and goes on moodily reading. I think he must be a dervish, for there are dervishes in the bazaar, as well as dervish soldiers and dervish sailors.

The next dealer is a bland man, all attention and anxiety—Armenian, I think, for the dealers of that nation are greater rogues than even the Greeks. I buy for a sovereign, a javelin head, needle-shaped at the point, inlaid

with gold. I drive it on trial through a half-crown at one dig. The ripple-mark all over it shows it to be good stuff, if not pure Damascus. So at least I think, until night, when, producing it in triumph after dinner at Misseri's, I am told that such spear-heads are made by thousands in Russia to send to Persia, where they are fitted to cane staves, and used for wild-boar hunting. I also buy a kind of rough butcher's knife with an ivory handle, which I despise, but with which a learned Nimrod at Misseri's cuts two pennies through without injuring the edge, and with which he tells me, if he had a fair slash, he could separate a wild dog at one blow.

Zohrab, the sword-merchant next door, dazzles my volatile imagination with a lathy yataghan in a red velvet sheath, which, I am told, belonged once to nobody less than the Pasha of Tripoli. It is very top-heavy and awkward to me, but I learn that its use does not depend on main force, but on legerdemain, and that one razor-like shave of it, outwards and then inwards, will move off a man's head (provided the man is willing) as gently and neatly as you can tip off a wild rose-shoot with a riding-whip. Zohrab next tries to inflict on me, a bundle of hide whips and a Janissary's helmet. Here I must pause to say that the Cid himself, or Scanderbeg, or Kara George of Servia, could not have worn a more chivalrous and artful head covering. It consisted of a steel cap, spiked at top, and worked so skilfully for lightness that it was not thicker than a cocoa-nut-shell cup. It bore over the brow, a legend from the Koran, worked in gold, and on one side of the spike was a tube to receive the plume that its proud Janissary owner must have carried through the flaming torrent of many a Hungarian battle. From the edge of this steel cap, which was padded thick and soft on the inside with red velvet now faded to yellow, fell a finely woven steel tippet, strong enough to keep out an inquisitive sword-blade, but worse than powerless before the almond-shaped rifle bullet, that, driving into a wound a link or two of this artful steel, would render the injury mortal, and past all probing. Then I was tempted with a sort of chocolate frother of steel, and with a double battle-axe with a dagger in the handle, and other charitable inventions of no commercial utility.

But I had been a month in Constantinople, yet had no fez; that must be remedied. A Jew tout, one Barsabas by name, guided me to the fez store. I have white muslin to buy to wind round my fez, and keep off the per-tinacious sun.

"In the name of the Prophet, fezes!" "My lord shall be obeyed. England is a paradise, its people are all sultans, and do as seemeth them good."

The dealer slips his hand, accurately as a compositor's, into a pigeon-hole; he draws out a bundle of fezes, folded flat, one tucked in the other. They are of all shades of red, from peony crimson to poppy scarlet, carnation colour, and the hue of a boiled lobster's shell. At the top of

each there is a little stalk, Chinese in effect, where the full blue tassel is to be bound. He tries one on, hands me a mirror, and falls back, as does Barsabas the Jew tout, in sudden spasms of delight, wonder, and astonishment. I look a son of war; it fits me as if I had been a true Mussulman all my life. It is worth, however, three shillings, and he asks me ten. Barsabas wrangles, with anger and vexation, but only to keep up appearances, for he is accustomed to help Franks to bazaar goods at three hundred times their real value. A man with water-skins passing, stops to smile—at which I feel flattered; a raisin-water vendor puts down his tins and gives advice; the dealers all round whisper and laugh together, as much as to say, "How that villain Achmed is plundering that miserable infidel! Allah!"

I buy it, however, resolutely; it fits my head like a skin. I give two shillings for nine penny-worth of muslin with gilt fuzzy ends, and twist them Levantwise round my frizzling brains. Barsabas, who has been twiddling for some time a diplomatic cigarette, now hands it me. I am, indeed, tied and bound in the hands of the Philistines. Still I am lucky, for I have only been slapped once to-day, and spat at twice. I am thirsty and lame, and have been envied by dogs several times. I feel my liver out of order, and I have been much cheated, otherwise I have spent a pleasant Turkish day; though rather plagued by Jews and tormented by guides.

I have come across several old Oriental customs too: for instance, that grated window of the dervish's tomb, where the votive bits of rag tied to the bars fluttered so strangely; then, the khan with the yard full of skins of Syrian tobacco; and the mosque where the porter was praying at the door, while the priest was throwing seed by handfuls to the courtyard pigeons.

Now, I plunge out into the sunshine again, feeling as if I had suddenly emerged from a cave tomb, and dive down another vaulted tube, which is also a bazaar; but of what? pearls of Ormuz, silks of Samarcand? No; but nutmeg-graters, and candlesticks, and Cheap John Birmingham gridirons, half of them evidently such as my country has reason to be proud of producing. Turning back, half frightened at this romance-dispelling vision, I take Barsabas and bid him strike out through the streets for the Egyptian or drug bazaar, staying to look for a moment at a neat ivory spoon shop, and at a goldbeater's, where men beat at little books, from whose red pages oozes gold leaf, drossy and crumpling like sensitive plants at the air.

Now, because I do not people the bazaar defiles with any one but myself, Barsabas, Zenope, Zohrab, or the other dealers I have patronised, you must not suppose that from early morning, when the gates open, till four o'clock, when they shut, this city under cover is not crowded, for it is. It is choke-full all day, as Cheapside when the counting-houses are closing. Black slaves, eunuchs, yellow-booted

ladies slopping along, children, water-carriers with triangular water-skins on their backs, Turkish policemen, soldiers, oil-carriers, hammals with looped ropes hanging over their galled shoulders, and their knots strung like reticules on their swollen arms, Armenians with large fleshy noses and ox eyes, little harlequin bundles of children, Franks sturdy and rapid elbowing the crowd, and itinerant vendors of all kinds, form but a small part of the human congeries.

The Drug bazaar is my favourite, because it is so Oriental and so mysterious. Here the plaited baskets piled with roots and spices, the broad measures full of yellow-brown henna smoothed at the top to a cone and crossed at the top with two clean boxwood spoons, are evidently quite of another region than your own. There are little black lozenges of pastilles, covered with gilt, and intended to beatify the tobacco of your chibouk. The measures and baskets edged with coloured paper (purple to the brown henna, for instance), are ranged in tiers of different sizes, like the nose-gays in Covent-garden, or the roses at a flower-stand; and rather higher up than usual among these, sits the Turkish "lord of drugs," still as death, only the dark waver of his eye telling you that it is not a stuffed figure guarding the roots and gums. Here are poisons enough to last even a Borgia a lifetime; but I came for perfumes and can find none. Sulphur they have, and senna they have, but oil of jasmine, no.

So again I break out into the sunshine, and make, led by two wrangling Jews, for some yet untrodden district of the bazaars, and I find it in the old-clothes district. This bazaar has an impoverished look about even its buyers and sellers—nay, its very walls and windows are harmoniously suitable to the commodities exposed for sale. Here is a place for Sartor Resartus to moralise in, over the disguises of the pure Adam. The turban, being a home-made article composed of two parts—the eternal fez, or inner kernel, and the outer striped or many-coloured wrapper—is never exposed for sale in the East, the folding being renewed daily, and requiring the knowledge of a lifetime to give it the careless grace that a Mussulman dandy gives it. As for the street vagabond, his turban is but a rag round a sort of fallow brown night-cap, and he slips it off and rebinds it twenty times a day, just as a London costermonger perpetually twirls his "love lock" with his dirty finger. No; no turbans, cream-coloured or leaf-green, or yellow or blue, are here, but great dirty tapestries of greasy robes and dressing-gowns of the stage magician kind, and curtains of red and yellow, and brown Syrian scarfs yards and yards long and tufted at the end with little fly-fishing crimson and yellow knotted silks; and eyeing the dealer and his circle of gossipers suspiciously, stroll ruffianly Greeks, with black gaiters gartered with crimson, huge ruffling kilts, and long curved daggers in silver-embossed sheaths sloping across the waist-belt. And this defiant weapon is tucked in over a huge pad of brown leather, which is the Greek's purse and

pistol-holder, though it looks like a small blacksmith's apron. I sit down on a dealer's counter on the right-hand side, and have dealings about some Syrian scarfs and about some skins of lambs from Astracan, which Rocket wants to line a travelling-cloak with. They show me white skins and black skins, fit for an emir in point of luxury, but, alas! fit for that emir too in point of price. Showers of Turkish numerals assail me as I pass out in search of pastures new.

This time I aim at the Tent bazaar, and I find it after much trouble; and this word "trouble" is my cue for describing how it takes the keenest traveller some weeks before he can be ever sure of getting straight from Misseri's Hotel to the central mass of bazaars. It requires a map-maker's head, and the sagacity of a Columbus, to find the way between the two points. In the first place, Turkish streets, except up in Pera, have no names; they are known, only from the nearest mosque, fountain, or barracks, so that you can ask for no special street, and if you do, the Turk can give you but very generalised and vague answers. Ten to one it is a Persian you ask, or an Armenian, or an Arab, or a Crim Tartar, or an Arnout, and if it be really a Turk, the miserable creature perhaps does not speak *your* Turkish, but some horrible patois and baragouin of his own, substituted, it seems, on purpose to spite you. Then the crippling streets, the thirsty fervid heat, the perplexed lanes, the dangerous crowds, make you so irritable, dry, perspiring, and lame, that you soon get worn to a thread, and have no courage to do anything but walk on by mere animal instinct. You know the bazaars are low down the hill, to the right of St. Sophia and the Seraglio, and under or to the left of the Hippodrome. On the wooden bridge you feel positive that the bazaar is just here. You get in Stamboul, ascend the river-side steps, turn right and turn left, then you are confused and uncertain—you disdain to inquire—you push on—hesitate—are lost! You look round; a hammal sets you right for a street; you come to a house you are sure you remember, because green tendrils of the vine are trained right across the way. You look up a turning to the left, and you see a similar vine at the tobaccoist's at the further corner; you are tired, hungry, helpless; you are hopeless, but you are not forsaken. Benjamin and Barsabas have been watching you for half an hour. They fell into your unconscious train at the bridge of boats. They then, unknown to you, hovered about the enemy, and marked the road he took. As you look round, you see the smiling rogues, knowing your helplessness, drinking at a fountain. They come up and accost you. Two turns, and you have shot into the needle's eye. Another hour and you meet Rocket "slanging" a Jew attendant, yet doing all he suggests, and loading him with new purchases of shawls, bags, bracelets, yellow slippers, Janissary pistols, and Turkey carpets. He is a Queen's messenger, remember, and half these things will go back in

his "bags" as "despatches," under the care of the Right Honourable Ignis Fatuus, removed to Vienna.

FOLDED HANDS.

SUFFERER! on thy couch of pain,
Hail the hour of ease again;
Long by mortal sickness tried,
By thy sufferings purified,
Heir of sorrow from thy birth,
Of the pains and throes of earth,

Fold thy hands!

Respite brief of ease and rest,
Fold them o'er thine aching breast.

Woman! o'er whose sunken eyes,
The last rushlight glimmer dies,
Lay thine ill-paid toil away,
Till the morrow's hungry day;
Seek the respite and release,
Heaven will give in dreams of peace.

Fold thy hands!

Earth denies thee food, not rest,
Fold them o'er thy patient breast!

Garment of a soul laid by,
Silent lips and rayless eye,
Now these mortal lands lay down,
Spade, or distaff, cross, or crown;
Freed one! fresh from care and strife,
Finished is thy sum of life;

Fold thy hands!

Ere thou seek'st thy long, last rest,
Fold them o'er thy pulseless breast!

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

Is the sweet little cherub who sits smiling aloft and keeps watch on the life of Poor Jack, commissioned to take charge of Mercantile Jack, as well as Jack of the national navy? If not, who is? What is the cherub about, and what are we all about, when Poor Mercantile Jack is having his brains slowly knocked out by pennyweights, aboard the brig Beelzebub, or the bark Bowie-knife—when he looks his last at that infernal craft, with the first officer's iron boot-heel in his remaining eye, or with his dying body towed overboard in the ship's wake, while the cruel wounds in it do "the multitudinous seas incarnadine"?

Is it unreasonable to entertain a belief that if, aboard the brig Beelzebub or the barque Bowie-knife, the first officer did half the damage to cotton that he does to men, there would presently arise from both sides of the Atlantic so vociferous an invocation of the sweet little cherub who sits calculating aloft, keeping watch on the markets that pay, that such vigilant cherub would, with a winged sword, have that gallant officer's organ of destructiveness out of his head in the space of a flash of lightning?

If it be unreasonable, then am I the most unreasonable of men, for I believe it with all my soul.

This was my thought as I walked the dock-quays at Liverpool, keeping watch on poor Mercantile Jack. Alas for me! I have long outgrown the state of sweet little cherub; but there I was, and there Mercantile Jack was, and very busy he was, and very cold he was: the snow yet lying in the frozen furrows of the

land, and the north-east winds snipping off the tops of the little waves in the Mersey, and rolling them into hailstones to pelt him with. Mercantile Jack was hard at it, in the hard weather, as he mostly is in all weathers, poor Jack. He was girded to ships' masts and funnels of steamers, like a forester to a great oak, scraping and painting; he was lying out on yards, furling sails that tried to beat him off; he was dimly discernible up in a world of giant cobwebs, reefing and splicing; he was faintly audible down in holds, stowing and unshipping cargo; he was winding round and round at captains melodious, monotonous, and drunk; he was *à* diabolical aspect, with coaling for the Antipodes; he was washing decks barefoot, with the breast of his red shirt open to the blast, though it was sharper than the knife in his leathern girdle; he was looking over bulwarks, all eyes and hair; he was standing by at the shoot of the Cunard steamer, off to-morrow, as the stocks in trade of several butchers, poulterers, and fishmongers, poured down into the ice-house; he was coming aboard of other vessels, with his kit in a tarpaulin bag, attended by plunderers to the very last moment of his shore-going existence. As though his senses when released from the uproar of the elements were under obligation to be confused by other turmoil, there was a rattling of wheels, a clattering of hoofs, a clashing of iron, a jolting of cotton and hides and casks and timber, an incessant deafening disturbance, on the quays, that was the very madness of sound. And as, in the midst of it, he stood swaying about, with his hair blown all manner of wild ways, rather crazedly taking leave of his plunderers, all the rigging in the docks was shrill in the wind, and every little steamer coming and going across the Mersey was sharp in its blowing off, and every buoy in the river bobbed spitefully up and down, as if there were a general taunting chorus of "Come along, Mercantile Jack! Ill-lodged, ill-fed, ill-used, hounded, entrapped, anticipated, cleaned out. Come along, Poor Mercantile Jack, and be tempest-tossed till you are drowned!"

The uncommercial transaction which had brought me and Jack together, was this;—I had entered the Liverpool police-force, that I might have a look at the various unlawful traps which are every night set for Jack. As my term of service in that distinguished corps was short, and my personal bias in the capacity of one of its members has ceased, no suspicion will attach to my evidence that it is an admirable force. Besides that it is composed, without favour, of the best men that can be picked, it is directed by an unusual intelligence. Its organisation against Fires, I take to be much better than the metropolitan system, and in all respects it tempers its remarkable vigilance with a still more remarkable discretion.

Jack had knocked off work in the docks some hours, and I had taken, for purposes of identification, a photograph-likeness of a thief, in the portrait-room at our head police-office (on the whole, he seemed rather complimented

by the proceeding), and I had been on police-parade, and the small hand of the clock was moving on to ten, when I took up my lantern to follow Mr. Superintendent to the traps that were set for Jack. In Mr. Superintendent I saw, as anybody might, a tall, well-looking, well set-up man of a soldierly bearing, with a cavalry air, a good chest, and a resolute but not by any means ungentle face. He carried in his hand a plain black walking-stick of hard wood; and whenever and wherever, at any after-time of the night, he struck it on the pavement with a ringing sound, it instantly produced a whistle out of the darkness, and a policeman. To this remarkable stick, I refer an air of mystery and magic which pervaded the whole of my perquisition among the traps that were set for Jack.

We began by diving into the obscurest streets and lanes of the port. Suddenly pausing in a flow of cheerful discourse, before a dead wall, apparently some ten miles long, Mr. Superintendent struck upon the ground, and the wall opened and shot out, with military salute of hand to temple, two policemen—not in the least surprised themselves, not in the least surprising Mr. Superintendent.

"All right, Sharpeye?"

"All right, sir."

"All right, Trampfoot?"

"All right, sir."

"Is Quickear there?"

"Here am I, sir."

"Come with us."

"Yes, sir."

So, Sharpeye went before, and Mr. Superintendent and I went next, and Trampfoot and Quickear marched as rear-guard. Sharpeye, I soon had occasion to remark, had a skilful and quite professional way of opening doors—touched latches delicately, as if they were keys of musical instruments—opened every door he touched, as if he were perfectly confident that there was stolen property behind it—instantly insinuated himself, to prevent its being shut.

Sharpeye opened several doors of traps that were set for Jack, but Jack did not happen to be in any of them. They were all such miserable places that really, Jack, if I were you, I would give them a wider berth. In every trap, somebody was sitting over a fire, waiting for Jack. Now, it was a crouching old woman, like the picture of the Norwood Gipsy in the old sixpenny dream-books; now, it was a crimp of the male sex in a checked shirt and without a coat, reading a newspaper; now, it was a man crimp and a woman crimp, who always introduced themselves as united in holy matrimony; now, it was Jack's delight, his (un)lovely Nan; but they were all waiting for Jack, and were all frightfully disappointed to see us.

"Who have you got up-stairs here?" says Sharpeye, generally. (In the Move-on tone.)

"Nobody, surr; sure not a blessed soul!" (Irish feminine reply.)

"What do you mean by nobody? Didn't I hear a woman's step go up-stairs when my hand was on the latch?"

"Ah! sure thin you're rhyght, surr, I forgot her! 'Tis on'y Betsy White, surr. Ah! you know Betsy, surr. Come down, Betsy darlin', and say the gintlemin."

Generally, Betsy looks over the banisters (the steep staircase is in the room) with a forcible expression in her protesting face, of an intention to compensate herself for the present trial by grinding Jack finer than usual when he does come. Generally, Sharpeye turns to Mr. Superintendent, and says, as if the subjects of his remarks were wax-work:

"One of the worst, sir, this house is. This woman has been indicted three times. This man's a regular bad one likewise. His real name is Pegg. Gives himself out as Waterhouse."

"Never had sitch a name as Pegg near me back, thin, since I was in this house, bee the good Lard!" says the woman.

Generally, the man says nothing at all, but becomes exceedingly round-shouldered, and pretends to read his paper with rapt attention. Generally, Sharpeye directs our observation with a look, to the prints and pictures that are invariably numerous on the walls. Always, Trampfoot and Quickear are taking notice on the doorstep. In default of Sharpeye being acquainted with the exact individuality of any gentleman encountered, one of these two is sure to proclaim from the outer air, like a gruff spectre, that Jackson is not Jackson, but knows himself to be Fogle; or that Canon is Walker's brother, against whom there was not sufficient evidence; or that the man who says he never was at sea since he was a boy, came ashore from a voyage last Thursday, or sails to-morrow morning. "And that is a bad class of man, you see," says Mr. Superintendent, when we got out into the dark again, "and very difficult to deal with, who, when he has made this place too hot to hold him, enters himself for a voyage as steward or cook, and is out of knowledge for months, and then turns up again worse than ever."

When we had gone into many such houses, and had come out (always leaving everybody relapsing into waiting for Jack), we started off to a singing-house where Jack was expected to muster strong.

The vocalisation was taking place in a long low room up-stairs; at one end, an orchestra of two performers, and a small platform; across the room, a series of open pews for Jack, with an aisle down the middle; at the other end, a larger pew than the rest, entitled *Sxve*, and reserved for mates and similar good company. About the room, some amazing coffee-coloured pictures varnished an inch deep, and some stuffed creatures in cases; dotted among the audience, in Snug and out of Snug, the "Professionals;" among them, of course, the celebrated comic favourite Mr. Banjo Bones, looking very hideous with his blackened face and limp sugar-loaf hat; beside him, sipping rum-and-water, Mrs. Banjo Bones, in her natural colours—a little heightened.

It was a Friday night, and Friday night was considered not a good night for Jack. At any

rate, Jack did not show in very great force even here, though the house was one to which he much resorts, and where a good deal of money is taken. There was British Jack, a little maudlin and sleepy, lolling over his emptied glass, as if he were trying to read his fortune at the bottom; there was Loafing Jack of the Stars and Stripes, rather an unpromising customer, with his long nose, lank cheek, high cheek-bones, and nothing soft about him but his cabbage-leaf hat; there was Spanish Jack with curls of black hair, rings in his ears, and a knife not far from his hand, if you got into trouble with him; there were Maltese Jack, and Jack of Sweden, and Jack the Finn, looming through the smoke of their pipes, and turning faces that looked as if they were carved out of dark wood, towards the young lady dancing the hornpipe, who found the platform so exceedingly small for it that I had a nervous expectation of seeing her, in the backward steps, disappear through the window. Still, if all hands had been got together, they would not have more than half filled the room. Observe, however, said Mr. Licensed Victualler, the host, that it was Friday night, and, besides, it was getting on for twelve, and Jack had gone aboard. A sharp and watchful man, Mr. Licensed Victualler the host, with tight lips and a complete edition of Cocker's arithmetic in each eye. Attended to his business himself, he said. Always on the spot. When he heard of talent, trusted nobody's account of it, but went off by rail to see it. If true talent, engaged it. Pounds a week for talent—four pound—five pound. Banjo Bones was undoubted talent. Hear this instrument that was going to play—it was real talent! In truth it was very good; a kind of piano-accordion, played by a young girl of a delicate prettiness of face, figure, and dress, that made the audience look coarser. She sang to the instrument, too; first, a song about village bells, and how they chimed; then a song about how I went to sea; winding up with an imitation of the bagpipes, which Mercantile Jack seemed to understand much the best. A good girl, said Mr. Licensed Victualler. Kept herself select. Sat in Snug, not listening to the blandishments of Mates. Lived with mother. Father dead. Once, a merchant well to do, but over speculated himself. On delicate inquiry as to salary paid for item of talent under consideration, Mr. Victualler's pounds dropped suddenly to shillings—still it was a very comfortable thing for a young person like that, you know; she only went on, six times a night, and was only required to be there from six at night to twelve. What was more conclusive was, Mr. Victualler's assurance that he "never allowed any language, and never suffered any disturbance." Sharpeye confirmed the statement, and the order that prevailed was the best proof of it that could have been cited. So, I came to the conclusion that Poor Mercantile Jack might do (as I am afraid he does) much worse than trust himself to Mr. Victualler, and pass his evenings here.

But we had not yet looked, Mr. Superin-

tendent—said Trampfoot, receiving us in the street again with military salute—for Dark Jack, True, Trampfoot. Ring the wonderful stick, rub the wonderful lantern, and cause the spirits of the stick and lantern to convey us to the Darkies.

There was no disappointment in the matter of Dark Jack; he was producible. The Genii set us down in the little first-floor of a little public-house, and there, in a stiflingly close atmosphere, were Dark Jack and Dark Jack's Delight, his *white* unlovely Nan, sitting against the wall all round the room. More than that: Dark Jack's Delight was the least unlovely Nan, both morally and physically, that I saw that night.

As a fiddle and tambourine band were sitting among the company, Quickear suggested why not strike up? "Ah la'ads!" said a negro sitting by the door, "gib the jebblem a darnse. Tak' yah pardlers, jebblem, for 'um QUAD-rill.

This was the landlord, in a Greek cap, and a dress half Greek and half English. As master of the ceremonies, he called all the figures, and occasionally addressed himself parenthetically—after this manner. When he was very loud, I use capitals.

"Now den! Hoy! ONE. Right and left. (Put a steam on, gib 'um powder). LA-dies' chail. BAL-loon say. Lemonade! TWO. AD-warnse and go back (gib 'ell a breakdown, shake it out o' yerselbs, keep a movil). SWING-corners, BAL-loon say, and Lemonade! (Hoy!) THREE. GENT come for'ard with a lady and go back, hoppersite come for'ard with a lady and go back, ALL four come for'ard and do wlat yer can. (Acihooy!) BAL-loon say, and leetle lemonade (Dat hairnigger by um fireplace 'hind a' time, shake it out o' yerselbs, gib 'ell a breakdown). Now den! Hoy! FOUR! Lemonade. BAL-loon say, and swing. FOUR ladies meets in 'um middle, FOUR gents goes round 'um ladies, FOUR gents passes out under 'um ladies' arms, SWING—and Lemonade till 'a moosic can't play no more! (Hoy, Hoy!)"

The male dancers were all blacks, and one was an unusually powerful man of six feet three or four. The sound of their flat feet on the floor was as unlike the sound of white feet as their faces were unlike white faces. They toed and heeled, shuffled, double-shuffled, double-double-shuffled, covered the buckle, and beat the time out, rarely, dancing with a great show of teeth, and with a childish, good-humoured enjoyment that was very prepossessing. They generally kept together, these poor fellows, said Mr. Superintendent, because they were at a disadvantage singly, and liable to slights in the neighbouring streets. But, if I were Light Jack, I should be very slow to interfere oppressively with Dark Jack, for, whenever I have had to do with him I have found him a simple and a gentle fellow. Bearing this in mind I asked his friendly permission to leave him restoration of beer, in wishing him good night, and thus it fell out that the last words I heard him say as I blundered down the worn stairs, were, "Jebblem's elth! Ladies drinks fust!"

The night was now well on into the morning, but, for miles and hours we explored a strange

world, where nobody ever goes to bed, but everybody is eternally sitting up, waiting for Jack. This exploration was among a labyrinth of dismal courts and blind alleys, called Entries, kept in wonderful order by the police, and in much better order than by the corporation: the want of gaslight in the most dangerous and infamous of these places being quite unworthy of so spirited a town. I need describe but two or three of the houses in which Jack was waited for, as specimens of the rest. Many we attained by noisome passages so profoundly dark that we felt our way with our hands. Not one of the whole number we visited, was without its show of prints and ornamental crockery; the quantity of the latter set forth on little shelves and in little cases, in otherwise wretched rooms, indicating that Mercantile Jack must have an extraordinary fondness for crockery, to necessitate so much of that bait in his traps.

Among such garniture, in one front parlour in the dead of the night, four women were sitting by a fire. One of them had a male child in her arms. On a stool among them was a swarthy youth with a guitar, who had evidently stopped playing when our footsteps were heard.

"Well! how do *you* do?" says Mr. Superintendent, looking about him.

"Pretty well, sir, and hope you gentlemen are going to treat us ladies, now you have come to see us."

"Order there!" says Sharpey.

"None of that!" says Quickcar.

Trampfoot, outside, is heard to confide to himself, "Meggisson's lot this is. And a bad 'un!"

"Well!" says Mr. Superintendent, laying his hand on the shoulder of the swarthy youth, "and who's this?"

"Antonio, sir."

"And what does *he* do here?"

"Come to give us a bit of music. No harm in that, I suppose?"

"A young foreign sailor?"

"Yes. He's a Spaniard. You're a Spaniard, aint you, Antonio?"

"Me Spanish."

"And he don't know a word you say, not he, not if you was to talk to him till doomsday." (Triumphantly, as if it redounded to the credit of the house.)

"Will he play something?"

"Oh, yes, if you like. Play something, Antonio. *You* aint ashamed to play something; are you?"

The cracked guitar raises the feeblest ghost of a tune, and three of the women keep time to it with their heads, and the fourth with the child. If Antonio has brought any money in with him, I am afraid he will never take it out, and it even strikes me that his jacket and guitar may be in a bad way. But, the look of the young man and the tinkling of the instrument so change the place in a moment to a leaf out of Don Quixote, that I wonder where his mule is stabled, until he leaves off.

I am bound to acknowledge (as it tends rather

to my uncommercial confusion), that I occasioned a difficulty in this establishment, by having taken the child in my arms. For, on my offering to restore it to a ferocious joker not unstimulated by rum, who claimed to be its mother, that unnatural parent put her hands behind her, and declined to accept it; backing into the fireplace, and very shrilly declaring, regardless of remonstrance from her friends, that she knewed it to be Law, that whoever took a child from its mother of his own will, was bound to stick to it. The uncommercial sense of being in a rather ridiculous position with the poor little child beginning to be frightened, was relieved by my worthy friend and fellow constable, Trampfoot; who, laying hands on the article as if it were a Bottle, passed it on to the nearest woman, and bade her "take hold of that." As we came out, the Bottle was passed to the ferocious joker, and they all sat down as before, including Antonio and the guitar. It was clear that there was no such thing as a nightcap to this baby's head, and that even he never went to bed, but was always kept up—and would grow up, kept up—waiting for Jack.

Later still in the night, we came (by the court "where the man was murdered," and by the other court across the street, into which his body was dragged) to another parlour in another Entry, where several people were sitting round a fire in just the same way. It was a dirty and offensive place, with some ragged clothes drying in it; but there was a high shelf over the entrance-door (to be out of the reach of marauding hands, possibly), with two large white loaves on it, and a great piece of Cheshire cheese.

"Well!" says Mr. Superintendent, with a comprehensive look all round. "How do *you* do?"

"Not much to boast of, sir." From the curtsying woman of the house. "This is my good man, sir."

"You are not registered as a common Lodging House?"

"No, sir."

Sharpey (in the Move-on tone) puts in the pertinent inquiry, "Then why ain't you?"

"Ain't got no one here, Mr. Sharpey," rejoins the woman and my good man together, "but our own family."

"How many are you in family?"

The woman takes time to count, under pretence of coughing, and adds, as one scant of breath, "Seven, sir."

But she has missed one, so Sharpey, who knows all about it, says:

"Here's a young man here makes eight, who ain't of your family?"

"No, Mr. Sharpey, he's a weekly lodger."

"What does he do for a living?"

The young man here, takes the reply upon himself, and shortly answers, "Ain't got nothing to do."

The young man here, is modestly brooding behind a damp apron pendent from a clothes-line. As I glance at him I become—but I don't know why—vaguely reminded of Woolwich, Chatham, Portsmouth, and Dover. When we get out, my

respected fellow-constable Sharpeye addressing Mr. Superintendent, says:

"You noticed that young man, sir, in at Darby's?"

"Yes. What is he?"

"Deserter, sir."

Mr. Sharpeye further intimates that when we have done with his services, he will step back and take that young man. Which in course of time he does: feeling at perfect ease about finding him, and knowing for a moral certainty that nobody in that region will be gone to bed.

Later still in the night, we came to another parlour up a step or two from the street, which was very cleanly, neatly, even tastefully, kept, and in which, set forth on a draped chest of drawers masking the staircase, was such a profusion of ornamental crockery, that it would have furnished forth a handsome sale-booth at a fair. It backed up a stout old lady—HOGARTH drew her exact likeness more than once—and a boy who was carefully writing a copy in a copybook.

"Well, ma'am, how do you do?"

Sweetly, she can assure the dear gentlemen, sweetly. Charming, charmingly. And overjoyed to see us.

"Why, this is a strange time for this boy to be writing his copy. In the middle of the night!"

"So it is, dear gentlemen, Heaven bless your welcome faces and send ye prosperous, but he has been to the Play with a young friend for his diversion, and he combines his improvement with entertainment by doing his school-writhing afterwards, God be good to ye!"

The copy admonished human nature, to subjugate the fire of every fierce desire. One might have thought it recommended stirring the fire, the old lady so approved it. There she sat, rosilily beaming at the copy-book and the boy, and invoking showers of blessings on our heads, when we left her in the middle of the night, waiting for Jack.

Later still in the night, we came to a nauseous room with an earth floor, into which the refuse scum of an alley trickled. The stench of this habitation was abominable; the seeming poverty of it, diseased and dire. Yet, here again, was visitor or lodger—a man sitting before the fire, like the rest of them elsewhere, and apparently not distasteful to the mistress's niece, who was also before the fire. The mistress herself had the misfortune of being in jail.

Three weird old women of transcendent ghastliness, were at needlework at a table in this room. Says Trampfoot to First Witch, "What are you making?" Says she, "Money-bags."

"What are you making?" retorts Trampfoot, a little off his balance.

"Bags to hold your money," says the witch shaking her head, and setting her teeth; "you as has got it."

She holds up a common cash-bag, and on the table is a heap of such bags. Witch Two laughs at us. Witch Three scowls at us. Witch sisterhood all, stitch, stitch. First Witch has a red circle round each eye. I fancy it like the beginning of the development of a perverted

diabolical halo, and that when it spreads all round her head, she will die in the odour of devilry.

Trampfoot wishes to be informed what First Witch has got behind the table, down by the side of her, there? Witches Two and Three croak angrily, "Show him the child!"

She drags out a skinny little arm from a brown dust-heap on the ground. Adjured not to disturb the child, she lets it drop again. Thus we find at last that there is one child in the world of Entries who goes to bed—if this be bed.

Mr. Superintendent asks how long are they going to work at those bags?

How long? First Witch repeats. Going to have supper presently. See the cups and saucers, and the plates.

Mr. Superintendent opines, it is rather late for supper, surely?

"Late? Ay! But we has to 'arn our supper afore we eats it!" Both the other witches repeat this after First Witch, and take the Un-commercial measurement with their eyes, as for a charmed winding-sheet. Some grim discourse ensues, referring to the mistress of the cave, who will be released from jail to-morrow. Witches pronounce Trampfoot "right there," when he deems it a trying distance for the old lady to walk; she shall be fetched by niece in a spring-cart.

As I took a parting look at First Witch in turning away, the red marks round her eyes seemed to have already grown larger, and she hungrily and thirstily looked out beyond me into the dark doorway, to see if Jack were there. For, Jack came even here, and the mistress had got into jail through deluding Jack.

When I at last ended this night of travel and got to bed, I failed to keep my mind on comfortable thoughts of Seaman's Homes (not overdone with strictness), and improved dock regulations giving Jack greater benefit of fire and candle aboard ship, through my mind's wandering among the vermin I had seen. Afterwards the same vermin ran all over my sleep. Evermore, when on a breezy day I see Poor Mercantile Jack running into port with a fair wind under all sail, I shall think of the unsleeping host of devourers who never go to bed, and are always in their set traps waiting for him.

FRANCE AND FREE TRADE.

If our ancestors were to rise from their tombs, were to be boiled down young again, and were to mix with their fellow-men as of old, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, what would most astonish them in this nineteenth century? Mr. Silk Buckingham has declared that teetotalism is the great fact of the age—the mightiest revolution that has been achieved since the disciples went forth from Jerusalem to convert the Gentiles to Christianity. Another authority maintains that chloroform, abrogating, as it does, the curse of pain under which man has suffered ever since he

was banished from Eden, must be regarded as much more wonderful. If we read the mottoes that are inscribed on boxes of lucifer-matches, it will be evident that in the opinion of the manufacturers it is still more difficult to find a parallel to their performances, for we must go back to the creation of the world, when the Almighty said, "Let there be light, and there was light." So I might go on mentioning all sorts of things, from the railroad and the telegraph, which have annihilated space and time, to the pannus corium, which has abolished corns, and to the stove which has the glory of being smokeless; but in enumerating all these novelties, great and small, a greater than any of them would most likely be forgotten, because of the silence and the slowness of its growth. Up to a very late period it was thought that there was something despicable in trade. It was not for a gentleman to engage in trade. Traders accepted the position, and felt that there was something mean in their occupation. Lord Stanhope tells us, that in the last century it was understood in Scotland that the only business in which a gentleman could be employed was that of a wine-merchant. The selection and distribution of wines was a matter of such overwhelming importance in those drinking days, that this, and this alone, in the way of merchandise, could deserve the attention of any one who claimed to be well born. All through history, we find the merchant regarded in the same way as a low fellow, actuated by selfish motives, and always enriching himself at the expense of his customers. In the middle of the last century, men began to study trade for the first time as a science, and not until that science was perfected and universally accredited, was the true dignity of the merchant's calling understood. Then it appeared that if trade were good for the merchant, it was even better for the customer; that if it made private fortunes, it also performed a public service; that if it were attractive to individuals, it was also essential to the state. It was a grand thing for the merchant to have the stigma of selfishness removed from his name; it was a grand thing for him to feel that he was no grasping wretch engaged only in serving himself, but that, doing his duty over his ledgers, he was as much a philanthropist, a patriot, and a gentleman, as if he were born to harangue in parliament, or educated to write for posterity.

There is no more striking revolution in the whole history of human affairs than this by which mercantile questions have ceased to be purely mercantile, and are regarded not less as moral and political. We laugh at the magniloquent advertisements in which some small invention is described as pregnant with the mightiest results for the regeneration of the world; but, perhaps, we would laugh less if, behind all the farce and puffery of advertising, we saw the moral interests that are really involved—if we saw that besides the twopence-halfpenny of profit which the trader is anxious to make out of his trifling improvement, he is really

bent on doing a service to the public, and is able to do it. In the last few years we have engaged in public works of prodigious magnitude, that have moved the world, and given a new character to civilisation. Is it by the simple leverage of a five or ten per cent. profit that we have been induced to embark in these undertakings? Not so. There is a romance as well as profit in them. Imagination is the strongest faculty in man, and we have been carried away by the love of perfection and the delight in enterprise, even more than by the hope of gain. Trade is now-a-days more than trade. It is a weapon of enormous power—it is enterprise in which the mightiest issues are at stake—it is a science of such vast importance that he who can best expound it becomes naturally the dominating minister of the greatest nations. It is perfectly well known on both sides of the Atlantic that trade has rendered a war between this country and the United States of America an impossibility. We have become necessary to each other's existence, and in this way trade has been able to produce a moral effect which our kindred origin, our mother tongue, our similar institutions, and our mutual admiration, have not of themselves been able to ensure. It is now suggested that more intimate commercial dealings with France may have the like effect, in consolidating an alliance between the two countries, and making us, who have been eternal enemies, eternal friends. To any one who has the slightest acquaintance with history and with the political philosophy of our fathers, the novelty and strangeness of such a proposal will be apparent. The merchant elevated into a diplomatist, and the argosy substituted for the man-of-war—in every past age of the world such an idea would have been laughed to scorn. So little is a policy in which mercantile considerations are involved, understood to this day on the Continent, that we are still described, in the phrase of Napoleon, as a nation of shopkeepers, and people cannot see that there is anything more in it than a sordid devotion to money.

The fallacy which lies at the root of all our old contempt for trade and our present distrust of free trade—the fallacy which infects the reasoning of all those Frenchmen who declare that France is going to be ruined because the emperor is to release the restrictions upon its trade and to abolish the absurd prohibitions that have hitherto prevented Monsieur from purchasing English manufactures—is this, that the profit of the seller is a loss to the buyer. If I sell tea, and get a shilling of profit on every pound that I dispose of, that shilling must come out of my customer's pocket, and he thinks it rather hard that if the tea costs me no more than three shillings and sixpence it should cost him four shillings and sixpence. I rob him of a shilling. He does not ask whether the article which I sell is worth the money. He simply sees that I make more in the way of profit than covers the necessary expenses of my business, and he grudges me that little bait which induces me to

stand behind the counter from morning to night engaged in the not very delightful task of doing up small parcels of tea and sugar. Buyers are far more numerous than sellers, and it is the buyers that give this bad account of the tradesman. If the seller were allowed to have his say, we should hear a very different story. "Yes," he would say, "I profit by my sales, but so also do you. What would you do without the articles that I sell at the lowest market price? You would be miserable without them. They are worth to you, all and even more than you pay. What the article has cost me is no more to the point than if I were to ask what your money has cost you. I sell the pound of tea because it is less valuable to me than four shillings and sixpence, and you give me that sum of money because it is less valuable to you than a pound of tea. You know precisely what my gain is, because it is measured in the current coin of the realm; but it does not follow that because your gain is more indefinite, therefore it is none at all. In paying me that four shillings and sixpence, you simply paid me in a convenient form the bottle of wine which I wanted to have for dinner to-day. I have exchanged my pound of tea which cost me three shillings and sixpence, for a bottle of wine which cost the wine merchant no more. That is surely quite fair. That is surely not robbery. Yet he and I are both enriched by the transaction, in obtaining what we value more, for what we value less; and are you, the medium of exchange, the only person who reaps no benefit? I said that I would not ask what your money has cost you, what it represents of corn and wine, the fruit of your own labour. Therefore I will not ask whether your money does not represent a considerable profit obtained by your own labour, and which you have simply exchanged against my profit. I am content to rest my case on the simple fact, that your four-and-sixpence is of less value to you than my pound of tea, or you would not have purchased it, and that you too, therefore, have a profit on the transaction. If you reply that my profit is greater than yours, it is possible that you are right, but it is nothing to the point. The question raised was, not whether you and I ought to have equal profits, but whether my profit is not your loss; whether I have not robbed you of a shilling. It appears that you are not a loser, and that I am not a robber." To most persons it is a great mystery where all this profit comes from, and they cannot understand how two people can profit by the same transaction. The only sort of profit which is generally understood, is that which comes from the kindly increase of nature. If a bushel of corn yield ten bushels in the harvest, it is taken as a matter of course. But if a bushel in one market realise double the price which it costs in another market, there are people who think the advance of price must be a swindle, and who cannot understand that the energy and foresight which are able to command it in a season of scarcity, are fully entitled to their reward. The fallacy is of the same

kind as one not long since exploded. It was considered injurious, and, indeed, criminal, to demand interest on money. The usurer was a wrong-doer who violated the scriptural precept. If I remember rightly, it is stated in no less than three of Lord Bacon's Essays, certainly in two, that the charge of breaking the Fourth Commandment is also to be brought against the usurer. He counts interest for the Sundays as well as other days, and, therefore, virtually works upon the Sabbath.

An error on a small scale looks very absurd, when nothing can be more imposing on a grand scale. I have dwelt on the absurdity of objecting to the tradesman's profit as if it were the customer's loss, because this is precisely the absurdity which is committed by those who are troubled at the prospect of importing too much of our neighbours' goods. Our friends over the Straits are distressed at the idea of being inundated with Sheffield ware, Manchester cotton, Redditch needles, and Staffordshire pottery. We were in our time alarmed at the thought of being dependent on the corn of Odessa and the wheat flour of France, of wearing the silks of Lyons, and drinking the vintages of the Gironde. We look at our imports and our exports. Our exports are what the nation sells, our imports are what the nation buys, and we like the former much more than the latter. People fancy that there is something profitable in the exports, but that there is a loss on the imports; that it is good for the nation to sell, not good for the nation to buy. At the end of the year we sum up our imports and our exports; we set the one against the other. If we have sold more than we have bought, we say that the balance of trade is favourable to us; if we have bought more than we have sold, that is to say, if the imports are more than the exports, then we pull long faces, and say that the balance of trade is unfavourable to us.

Let no one suppose that it is only determined Protectionists who maintain this theory. It is a theory which but the other day was fully accepted in the great Whig Review. Sir Archibald Alison, consistent Protectionist as he is, had declared that we are going to ruin, and adduced long lines of figures to show that ever since free trade, we were as a nation buying far more than we were selling, the inevitable result of which must be an imperial bankruptcy. The answer of the Whig Review is, that the figures are scarcely so bad as Sir Archibald Alison represents them to be, that in point of fact our exports exceed our imports, and that, therefore, we are not on the road to bankruptcy, but are getting on very well indeed. The principle is then admitted that it is by our sales we are to profit, and not by our purchases; that we may export as much as we like, but that it is not necessary for us to import. It is supposed that if we export more than we import, the balance must be paid to us in gold; while, on the other hand, if we import more than we export, we must discharge our debt in gold, thus impoverishing ourselves. For many long years this doctrine of the balance

of trade has held its ground in the face of the most obvious facts, on the strength of the current belief that there is profit in selling, and none in buying. Against that doctrine we have to set down, as matters of fact, that the imports of England, France, and the United States, not to mention other countries, do annually exceed their exports, and that, consequently, the three most flourishing nations in the world are driving on to bankruptcy. Can it be so? Are the three greatest nations of the world going down the rapids and on to the brink of doom? One would fancy that even Chowler would not venture on such an assertion. He might condemn any one of them "to everlasting redemption" of a morning, but to declare that all three are equally forlorn, is rather too much of a good thing. In case, however, that Chowler may be obdurate, and sad but stern may pronounce our fate, I will try to show in a few sentences that there is just as much profit in imports as in exports, and that, indeed, if our buying did not exceed our selling, we should be very badly off.

France has always had a profound distrust of cotton umbrellas made in England. France has indeed prohibited the importation of this interesting article. Now, I confess to an admiration of cotton umbrellas. It is pleasant to see an old lady hobbling about on pattens, with the tremendous cotton canopy overhead. It is not unpleasant to see her descending from the omnibus with the cotton protector dressed up according to the strictest laws of the fashion—the tape tied tight about the middle so as to give it a slender waist, while the cotton folds bulge above and below the waist with an amplitude which seems to imitate the expansive provision of nature in the lady herself. Surely, I have said to myself, there are ladies in France who will not despise the cotton umbrella. Surely a patriot, desirous of propagating English ideas, would wish to indoctrinate the French female into the mysteries of the cotton umbrella. I have therefore invested one thousand pounds in the purchase of cotton umbrellas, waiting for the alteration in the French tariff, the result of which will probably be, that instead of these articles being absolutely prohibited they will only be saddled with a protective duty of thirty per cent. At the end of the year, when our trade returns are made up, it will be seen that our exports in the article of cotton umbrellas have been increased by at least the one thousand pounds which I have invested. Follow my adventure to France. It will go by Havre to a wholesale house in Paris. What with commission, insurance, and the cost of transport, I have to pay fifty pounds for the conveyance of my goods to the Parisian warehouse, besides three hundred pounds to the French custom-house. As the duty is so high I have to be content with a small profit—ten per cent, or one hundred pounds, upon the whole. My customer in Paris, therefore, will have to pay me one thousand four hundred and fifty pounds for the umbrellas: of which three hundred and fifty pounds goes to pay expenses and duty, leaving me for my own

use one thousand one hundred pounds. What do I do with this one thousand one hundred pounds? Do I take bills, which I turn into cash to send to my banker's? I can do much better. I am going to do more good to my species. I am a lover of punctuality. I shall propagate watches among English men, as I have propagated cotton umbrellas among French women. I look at our trade returns, and see that we take annually from France about one hundred thousand watches, of which the average value is between two pounds and three pounds apiece. I mean to increase those returns, as my friends will see when Mr. Fonblanque issues his blue-book. My one thousand one hundred pounds is to be invested in French watches. It will cost me sixty pounds to carry them to the port of London, in commission, insurance, and transport. The duty I have to pay on them at the custom-house is two hundred and forty pounds, and I expect to make a profit on them of at least ten per cent, or one hundred and ten pounds in all. My goods will therefore be sold for one thousand five hundred and ten pounds, and two hundred and forty pounds of this sum having been out of malice aforethought laid on at the custom-house, the officers will declare in the returns that I have imported watches to the value of one thousand two hundred and seventy pounds, on which they have charged so much duty. As sixty pounds of this sum has been disbursed in freight and other charges, the money that finds its way into my pocket is in all one thousand two hundred and ten pounds. On the double transaction, therefore, I am a gainer of two hundred and ten pounds, while in the great ledger of the nation it is recorded that, whereas I exported one thousand pounds worth of goods, I have imported one thousand two hundred and seventy pounds worth. Is it not quite evident that if my imports were not larger than my exports I should be a loser? Is it not equally evident that if the national exports exceed the national imports, England, France, or the United States, which ever may be the unhappy country, must be a loser? Suppose the vessel that conveyed my cotton umbrellas, were wrecked on the Goodwin Sands, and all the umbrellas lost, I myself would not be a loser, for the cargo would be insured, but the money would be lost to the country; and yet the one thousand pounds having gone out of our ports would go to swell the sum of the national exports, and jolly Protectionists would rub their hands as they read this gratifying evidence of the prosperity of the nation.

In such a transaction as the foregoing, one can measure distinctly the profit that accrues to the buyer. The country is the buyer, and in the person of one of its citizens has profited to the extent of two hundred and ten pounds. Goods have been transferred from the places where they are least valuable to the places where they are most valuable, and in the simple process of transference, both countries have gained. Prohibit me by heavy duties from importing, and you also prohibit me from exporting. The

Frenchman to whom I consigned my umbrellas would probably not have been able to take them if I had demanded cash from him. It would not have been easy for him to have sent me eleven hundred pounds. But, when I chose to ask him for eleven hundred pounds' worth of watches, it was a different affair, for, as the watches cost him only one thousand pounds—he had practically one hundred pounds less to pay to me. There is a certain logic in the system which prohibits exports as well as imports, but none in the system which prohibits either imports only or exports alone. Merchants must have their exchange, and that exchange will not be paid in gold—or at all events it will not be paid long. When I think of the horror which Frenchmen have, of receiving imports from us, and the horror which Englishmen express at the bare idea of sending coal out of the country to supply all the world, I am reminded of the alarm created in Scotland about two centuries and a half ago, at the exportation of eggs: an alarm so powerful that the privy council felt themselves bound to issue an act forbidding the traffic. The act commences in this way: "Among the many abuses whilk the iniquity of the time and private respect of filthy lucre and gain has produced within the commonwealth, there is of late discoverit a most unlawful and pernicious tred of transporting of eggs furth of the kingdom. Certain avaritious and godless persons, void of modesty and discretion, preferring their awn private commodity to the commonweal, has gone and goes athort the country and buys the hail eggs that they can get, barrels the same, and transports them at their pleasure." The consequence of this iniquity is, that eggs have "risen to such extraordinary and heich prices as are not to be sufferit in a weel govirnit commonwealth;" and, moreover, it is feared that "if this unlawful tred be sufferit to be of ony longer continuance, it will fall out that in a very short time there will no eggs nor poultry be funden within the country." Therefore, on pain of heavy fines, the export of eggs is forbidden. As we take about a hundred millions of eggs from France every year, the illustration has a direct bearing on our mercantile connexions with the French. We can see the absurdity of France refusing to export eggs for fear of a deficiency of omelettes. These millions of French eggs are chiefly sold in London, Brighton, and the watering-places on the south coast, where they cost the consumer from a shilling to eighteenpence a dozen, the price even mounting up to two shillings a dozen when the eggs are sold as fresh English eggs. They cost in France, on the average, about fourpence a dozen, or about one hundred and forty thousand pounds in all. Why are the eggs exported, but because the peasant with his flocks of poultry which French artists are so fond of painting, gets perhaps a farthing a dozen more for them from the exporter, than he would get if the eggs were allowed to rot in the land of their nativity? If the eggs be one farthing a dozen less valuable in France, the country loses nearly

nine thousand pounds by refusing to export them. In the one case, France has the pleasure of laying her own eggs and then consuming them to the value of one hundred and thirty-one thousand pounds; in the other case she has the pleasure of receiving from us, provisions of precisely that value to replace her lost eggs, together with a little present of machinery, or woollen clothing, or horses, or whatever else she likes best, to the value of nine thousand pounds. Suppose, again, that we refuse to import these millions of French eggs. The Gallic cocks and hens will no doubt languish for lack of our encouragement, but shall we not do as much injury to ourselves as to the French poultry? English barn-door fowls will set to work and lay more eggs, and more eggs, and the cry will be Still they come! but each egg will cost more, and the country will be a loser to that extent. The British hen declines to lay for nothing. If the Gallic hen gives me a dozen of eggs for fourpence, while the British bird demands sixpence for the same number, I am a loser of twopence in going to the British nest for my supply.

Here comes in the Protectionist reply, that though the consumer loses by such a state of things, yet the producer profits, and it is right for a country to encourage its own manufactures, and to purchase them at a dead loss to itself. Take the case of iron, which is just now vexing the soul of the French Protectionist. He declares that French industry will be discouraged if the duty on English iron be lowered. Let us see. The duty on iron is so varying, according to the description of it—its admission being in some cases absolutely free, in others absolutely prohibited—that for the sake of simplicity and round numbers, I shall suppose a duty of only thirty per cent, raising the price of English iron by one-third its value; so that if a hundred-weight of unwrought iron cost twelve shillings in Belgium or England, it would cost eighteen shillings or a pound in France, and all because the French iron-masters cannot produce the material under that figure. The French iron-master says: "It is extremely important that I should be protected. There are an immense number of persons dependent on me; I give them labour, I give them wages, and in my prosperity they prosper also." This is all very well, until we examine the matter more closely, and it behoves us, therefore, to follow the fortunes of the Frenchman who has to purchase the iron. Suppose the French blacksmith, or nailer, or tool-maker, buying a hundred-weight of iron from the French iron-master. He has to pay eighteen shillings for it. He has, at a heavy price to himself, to put money into the pockets of the French iron trade in all its dependencies. If English iron were admitted free, he might get it for twelve or thirteen shillings, and might keep in his own pocket the extra six shillings, to purchase with it a pair of boots or some worsted clothing. Compelled to purchase French iron, he simply gets for his money a hundred-weight of iron. Permitted to purchase

English iron, he obtains for the same money a hundred-weight of iron, together with some good woollen stockings (and, by the way, it is so difficult to get woollen clothing in France, owing to the high rate of duty imposed on foreign combed wool, that it is announced, after an inquiry of the Council of State, that ten millions of the French are unable to afford themselves this luxury). Which is the more natural state of things? That the man who uses the iron should be fined six shillings for the benefit of the man who produces it, or that he should be allowed peaceable possession of his half-dozen shillings to spend as he pleases—be it in *cau sucrée*, in a new hat, or in a journey on the railway? The national industry must not be invoked for a doubtful cause. The national industry is, in the former case, benefited only to the extent of twelve shillings: for the extra six shillings make no addition to the national wealth. Peter is robbed of that sum, to pay Paul. There is nothing to show for it that could not equally be shown for the simple twelve shillings, if the English or Belgian iron were admitted to market.

It may be replied that in this latter case, although the Frenchman got his iron a third cheaper, still the twelve shillings would be paid out of the country, would be paid to England or Belgium, and only the six shillings would be expended in France. But this is quite a mistake. The debts of a nation are not paid in gold, but in material. The twelve shillings would be paid to the Englishman, in silk or in wine, in bronzes, or in gloves, in furniture, or in lace. Or, if the debt were actually paid in money, then the means of paying it must first have been derived from exports to some other country. The Frenchman wanting a hundred-weight of iron would virtually perform an operation of this sort. He would say to the French iron-master, "You are too dear for me; with all my desire to serve you, I must encourage some other species of industry among my countrymen which taxes my resources less: I will purchase silk at Lyons; I will take it to Turin. Although they make good velvets and silks in Italy, they have an extraordinary admiration of the French stuffs, and will give me a good price for my goods. The price I obtain I will give to the English merchant for his iron, and I will in effect exchange French silk for the English metal." Or again: "It is easier for me to encourage French millers than French iron-masters. Whether it is that the millstones of La Brie are wonderfully good, or that the French wheat being uncommonly hard is more adapted for fine grinding, I am not learned enough to tell; but I know that the English like our flour, and in 1858 bought from us to the value of a million and a half of their money. I will offer French flour for English iron, and I think I study in that way French interests, while at the same time I have in my pocket that extra six shillings to devote to some other species of French industry. I will invest it in walnut-wood. The English make guns for all the world, have a large rifle

manufactory at Enfield, but have no walnut-wood for the stocks of their guns. Towards the end of last war, the price of this wood rose from two shillings and three shillings, to eight shillings and ten shillings, for each stock. I will encourage with my six shillings the French walnut-tree plantations, and will exchange it against lambswool stockings or Sheffield razors." The Frenchman's argument in this case would be perfectly sound, though, in a small matter of fact, he would be reckoning without his host. It would not be possible for him to export the walnut-wood for gun-stocks. The French government, learning that our walnut plantations are exhausted, and that we have been procuring our gun-stocks from France, have laid a prohibition on the export. It is proposed to import English iron for French gun-barrels; will it also be proposed to allow the exportation of French wood for English gun-stocks?

Unfortunately, one cannot in these matters consider the cases of individuals. It was very hard for the watermen, when bridges were built over the Thames. It was very hard for the link-boys, when the streets were welllighted with gas. It was very hard for the chairmen, when cabs came into universal use. It was very hard for the coachmen, when railroads were established. It will be very hard for the thousands of Parisian water-carriers, when Paris is supplied with water in pipes. The world moves on, forgetful of individuals, and the point to be chiefly considered is, what is most for the general good. Now, the general rule to be laid down with regard to exports and imports is this, that the cheapening of any valuable commodity in a particular place, is a benefit conferred on all places: and that wealth acquired by my neighbour is not to be grudged, but is good for me as well as for him. Take any article of merchandise whatsoever—as gloves; in the last analysis, each pair of gloves represents a certain amount of labour, let us say a day's labour of the artisan. If the Frenchman be able, through superiority of climate, or help of machinery, or by any known means, to cheapen gloves, to reduce the quantity of labour which a pair represents, he benefits me, provided I have the means of exchanging an equivalent of my labour for his. By employing him to make the gloves, I do not require to expend so much of my strength in order to procure a pair. Half a day is enough, whereas previously a whole day was necessary. The cheapness thus made possible in France, is a direct benefit to England and the world. Suppose the French glove is one hour, or half an hour cheaper than the English glove. Multiply this by the three and a half millions of pairs that find their way from France to England, and estimate the gain to us. What a gain of hours to what number of Englishmen does this represent! And in like manner the wealth of France is a gain to England, as the wealth of my neighbour is in a sense also mine. Wealth is nothing if it be not employed. Superabundant wealth means superabundant power of purchasing. I must share to some extent in the good that flows from that ex-

penditure. No man can be rich for himself alone. As water finds its level, money will descend from the heights of society where it is stored, to give some share of blessing to the lowest of the low. There cannot be a greater blunder than the supposition that it is the interest of England to have poor neighbours, and that by the previous accumulation of resources we are able to draw all the wealth from less fortunate countries. It is England's interest, on the contrary, to have prosperous neighbours, who, with many superfluities on their hands, will be able to purchase what we have to offer; and it is the poor, far more than the rich, countries, that profit by the freedom of trade. If England were a poor country with few advantages, she could desire nothing better than to have a rich friend at hand with many advantages. Our natural advantages are so few that we waste our strength for nought, in attempting to produce a certain article, say wine. If France, through her natural advantages, is able to supply the wine better at half the price which it would cost us to produce it in this country, we share in the natural advantages enjoyed by France. So, if we can, by our unlimited supply of coal and iron, produce machinery, or cotton goods, or woollen clothes, much cheaper than the Frenchman, it is a positive benefit to him, apart from all questions of reciprocity. The point on which Protectionists dwell, is the fact that in such a case we should undersell the French manufacturers. The French manufacturers of, let us say, cotton goods, are limited in number, whereas the French people who require those goods are almost unlimited. The benefit we should confer on the French people by selling them our calicoes and prints, would be spread over a vast multitude, while the damage we should do to the French manufacturer would be confined to comparatively a few. It is these few who cry out, because they suffer severely, while, on the other hand, the millions do not shout the other way with sufficient loudness, because the positive gain to each is small in comparison.

It does not come within the scope of this periodical to handle vexed political questions, and to touch upon the details of the commercial treaty which the French Emperor has negotiated with the English Government. But who that keeps most aloof from politics is not interested in the good fortune of his friends, and in any measure that is likely to make those who have been friends before, faster friends than ever? We have prospered in this country by the freedom of our trade assisting our natural energy, and we are glad to think that France also is likely to prosper by following in our footsteps. As hitherto France has been the stronghold of protection on the Continent, it is to be hoped that all Europe will mark the example, and reap the benefit of the change. It will be a strange result if war be repressed among civilised nations, not by the precepts of mercy and the commands of the moral law, but by the necessities of trade and the attractions of

material gain. For nearly two thousand years the blessed Sermon on the Mount has been before the world, and nations have set it at nought whenever they thought that it stood in the way of their material interests. An effort is now being made, which, if fairly carried out, will go far to make these material interests coincide with the obligations of moral law, and thus far tend to make war an impossibility. It used to be said, "If you wish to make men prosperous and happy, make them good—begin with their morals." It is now said, "If you wish to make men good and happy, make them comfortable—begin with their material prosperity." Both are right, and both are wrong. We must begin at both ends. We shall beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks, all the sooner, if, to assist our sentimental dislike of swords and spears, we feel that we have the utmost need of ploughshares and pruning-hooks—that it is more profitable to war with nature than with nations—that it is better to shed the blood of the grape, than of our fellow-creatures.

OUR EYE-WITNESS AT A FRIENDLY LEAD.

SOME weeks ago, a gentleman—whose position as the owner of a factory in the neighbourhood of Bethnal-green had made him acquainted with certain customs obtaining among those in his employ—this gentleman, a stranger to your Eye-witness, but kindly anxious to direct his attention to a condition of affairs well worthy of notice, forwarded to him a card, of which a copy is subjoined.

A Friend-in-Need is a Friend-in-Deed.

A FRIENDLY LEAD.

Will take place on Saturday, January 28th, at Mr. Blake's White Horse, Hare Street, Bethnal Green, for the benefit of Mr. C. Norton, whose Daughter destroyed herself last Friday, and being in a poor position himself, your aid will greatly oblige... Tickets 1d. each.

C. Hall, Sen. Chairman. J. Spencer, Deputy.

Now a card such as this is just the kind of document which a man—on coming in contact with it for the first time—would read through twice or thrice, would turn round and round with his finger and thumb, would examine the back of, would endeavour to split with his nail, would scratch his chin with, looking absently out of window the while, would read through once more, and, finally, would so far favour with his confidence as to determine to look into the matter to which it made allusion.

Your Eye-witness will pass over certain preliminary matters connected with his undertaking, and will merely state that he set off alone on the evening of the 28th of January for Bethnal-green, Hare-street, the White Horse, and the Friendly Lead.

If your Eye-witness were brought for a few

minutes in contact with a certain branch of our metropolitan government, called the Lighting and Paving, he would reverently inquire what was the precise nature of the motives which induced it (the Lighting and Paving) to keep all the West-end and well-regulated neighbourhoods in a blaze of illumination, and to leave in Stygian darkness all those parts of our metropolis which are known to be haunted by disreputable characters, and which are unmistakably the head-quarters of pickpockets and other marauders. It is invariably the case that in those regions where danger is to be apprehended, the lights are dimmest and farthest apart, while in a thoroughfare like Portland-place you could see to read this article, standing between two gas-lamps at an equal distance from both.

A discovery of the exact principle on which the Lighting and Paving acts in this matter would be the more interesting, because it is evidently the same which influences the authorities connected with the ordering of our police arrangements. The policeman and the gas-lamp go together, and our constables are ever to be found rallying round each other in situations where there is plenty of light and life, while in cut-throat neighbourhoods you shall look for them in vain.

These audacious sentiments asserted themselves very strongly in the breast of your servant as, leaving behind him the crowded thoroughfare of Bishopsgate-street Without, he penetrated more and more into the remote intricacies of Bethnal-green. The farther he advanced, the fainter the illumination became, until at last he looked about some time before he could persuade himself that there were any lamps at all, and that there was any other feeble light than such as came from the few and melancholy shops, which were thinly scattered, here and there, on either side of the street.

But, if a dark street be a gloomy and depressing thing, what is a dark public-house. Accustomed to think of a gin-palace as a blazing temple which sheds a brilliant gleam across the street, and half-way up and down it, too, it is a dismal thing to have to do with a public-house which makes so little mark that it is difficult to find, and which, when found, looks black, and secret, and forbidding.

It must be acknowledged that when your Eye-witness arrived at the door of the House of Entertainment at which the Friendly Lead was to come off, the aspect of affairs was not inviting. Though there was little light emitted into the street by the tavern in question, the same complaint could not be made in the matter of noise. Nor were the sounds which emanated from the White Horse altogether of an amiable kind; the Friendly Lead might be going on upstairs, but it seemed not at all unlikely to lead to unfriendly followings below. There was no time, however, to be lost; your Eye-witness mounted a wooden staircase which led to the regions above, and, passing through an open door, found himself in a large upper apartment, with a fair

sprinkling of persons of both sexes seated round it, and with a very fair allowance of tobacco-smoke, correcting any undue freshness and clearness of the atmospheric air.

Your Eye-witness gained much obliging information from a gentleman who was sitting at a table close to the door of the room, with two plates before him, one upon the top of the other. When anybody, entering the apartment, put a penny or twopence into the upper plate, this gentleman, who appeared to be a sort of treasurer, slid the sum into the under receptacle—a soup-plate—and covered it up again as before. The treasurer's discourse was explanatory and terse in its phraseology. It was of this sort:

"You see, sir, a Friendly Lead is this here: when a poor man—being a factory worker, a jynner, a clockmaker, or what not—which this 'ere man himself is in the alarum business—his daughter being in the factory works at Gimp and Twister's round the corner—well sir, this poor man, not being this one particularly, but as it might be you or me, being a factory man, a clockmaker, or what not, say he falls into distress, gets behind, 'as a doctor's bill to pay, 'as to bury a child, leastways 'as some hextra payment to come down with which he did not look for—what is he, being a pore man, to do? Well, he comes to some friend as knows him, as it might be you or me, and he says, 'Simmons,' he says, 'here's a bundle of tickets,' he says, 'for a Lead; will you take a few and see if you can work 'em off?' he says. Well, I takes some, you takes some, and so does others of his friends, and we agin works 'em among our friends (promulging while we does so that this pore man is in exigency and want), and these makes it known agin to *their* friends, till at last a tidy lot is sold, being at a penny, tuppence, or what not. Very well; he comes next to this 'ouse, 'spectable 'ouse, or it might be any other, and he says to the landlord, 'Mr. Blake,' he says—as it might be you, or me—'I want your room for this night or that night, for a Lead amongst friends and in a friendly style, as it might be here or there or anywhere.' Then they meets together, and each man as he comes in, puts in his penny or tuppence, or what not, into the plate. Well, sir, the hobject of all this 'ere, is to hease him—being but a pore man, a factory worker, a clockmaker, or what not—to hease him a little; and first one comes in, and then another, and sometimes he makes a pretty good thing of it, and sometimes not so much; and then, being met together, perhaps some gentleman, as it might be you, or any one present, he obliges the society with a song; and first one sings, or it may be another—anybody, in short, as is willing to oblige—and so the hevening passes till it gets to be twelve o'clock, and the company being about to go, the party who receives the money, as it might be myself this night, he says a few words thanking 'em for their pincuriary assistance, or what not; and so, the money being reckoned up, is handed over to the man as the Lead is for, as it might be you or me, and then we breaks up for the night, and

perhaps one will stop a little, and another will stop a little, and take his three-pennorth at the bar or what not, depending on when it is or which it might be, wot you understand; but this 'ere being Saturday night, they will go the sooner, the 'ouse being closed at twelve."

"And why is it called a 'Lead'?"

"Well, don't you see that this pore man *being* but a pore man—a factory worker, a clock-maker, or what not—this is got up for to hease him," was the triumphant reply.

"Yes, I see that, but why 'Lead'? I don't see what it means."

"Why just you look 'ere, sir," says the treasurer, leaning over the table, and gesticulating demonstratively with his hands: smiling the while in patient pity—"just look 'ere: it means what I have just been explaining. Here is a pore man—being a factory worker, a clockmaker, or what not—he comes to one of his friends, as it might be you or me—"

Thrown back on his own resources for the means of discovering the derivation of this word "Lead," your Eye-witness could only conclude that it derived its origin from the fact that those who get the thing up take the lead in helping the indigent person, or lead the way in the matter of his relief.

The case to which this mode of relief was applied at the White Horse Tavern, was a peculiarly distressing one. A young girl, sixteen or seventeen years old, had committed suicide in a paroxysm of jealousy. It seemed that she and a lad of about her own age had been brought up almost always together, had been playmates and constant associates. An attachment had sprung up between them, and it was simply because she had seen this youngster in conversation with some other girl, that she determined to destroy herself: a resolution which she carried out by swallowing a quantity of a certain deadly acid used by her father in his trade. This case may remind the reader of one reported in the daily papers not long ago, in which a girl destroyed herself by jumping down the shaft of a disused mine, having merely seen her lover talking to a woman of whom she felt jealous. It is impossible to say whether the one tragedy, or rather the account of it which appeared in the newspapers, may have had any share in producing the other; it is far from impossible. One thing is quite certain: that such a suicide is often attributable to the thought of the effect it will produce on the person whose misconduct, real or supposed, has led to it: "He will hear of it, it will make him miserable—he will know at last how fond I was of him!"

We hardly know what persons of this class suffer, and how helpless they are under a great affliction. What do they know of the healing effects of time? They see no way out of the difficulty. They are miserable now, and that they will always be so is their present conviction. The balance is upset, they are puzzled, the small domain of thought—a narrow region with them—is rent by this moral earthquake:

"There is one remedy for all," says the bad voice within—and they take it.

The father of the unhappy girl in question in this instance, was present at this "Lead," and betrayed an interest of no common order in the contents of the soup-plates, in which the contributions of the visitors were collected. This personage was the hero of the evening. There is no one well acquainted with the lower classes of our countrymen who has not observed how their importance among their own circle of acquaintances is increased by a death. They regard their affliction, with a sense of proprietorship, and look upon it as highly creditable to the family generally. There is in this class some small entertainment of this feeling when *any* misfortune gives them a temporary prominence, but still a death is the great card of all. What a property a corpse is to them—and a funeral what a glory!

Such boy and girl attachments as this which had ended so terribly are extremely common among these factory workers, and others of the same order. Indeed, it was curious to observe the large number of young boys who were present on the occasion of this "Lead," and to notice the prominent part taken by these mere children, as well as the readiness of their seniors to give way to them. Is this a characteristic of our day? The old men seem almost afraid of the youngsters, who awe and surprise them into submission by their blasé, knowing airs. These little men and their sweethearts were to be seen in all parts of the room, and were smoking their pipes and drinking their beer with great gravity and importance; but such early and precocious beginnings are not favourable to the structural development of these boys, and they so rarely attain to any size that it seems as if Nature had determined to punish them for their presumption, and had decreed that since these small creatures had offended her by pretending that they were grown up, they should be made to take the consequences, and should find that at least, in the one respect of having "done growing," they should be men to their hearts' content.

Nor is this precocity of the youth of both sexes in this peculiar locality and grade of life at all surprising to those who have observed the early introduction of children and babies "into society," which prevails among our labouring classes. A baby has no sooner been carried across the parental threshold than it finds its way into the public, the penny gaff, the theatre gallery. Among the numerous babies present at the Friendly Lead, there was every indication of a nascent and dawning tendency to conviviality. To get down upon the floor among the feet of the company and grub in the sawdust of a spittoon, to sit upon the edge of a Windsor chair gnawing a petticoat—vendors of this delicacy pervaded the apartment throughout the evening—or to produce a partial nose eclipse by secreting of the tip of that feature in the bowl of a tobacco-pipe,—is the nursery play of your Bethnal-green baby.

"Nothing," said the mother of one of these

precocious infants, which had a pettitoe in one hand, and a long clay pipe in the other; "nothing," said the good woman, picking up the pettitoe for the seventh time, and restoring the glistening morsel now profusely adorned with sawdust, to her offspring; "will keep him good, like giving him a 'bacco-pipe to play with. It will keep him quiet for hours." And indeed the chief object of this child appeared to be the thrusting of the sharp end of his plaything by turns into every one of those orifices in the anatomy of the face and head, which Nature has beneficently intended as the apertures by which the things of the external world shall be brought to bear upon the brain.

By this time the room had begun to fill to an almost inconvenient extent, and the more convivial aspects of the evening's entertainment to develop themselves. The amusements were entirely of a musical, and mainly of a vocal, nature. The chairman led the way, and, producing a great order and silence by a free use of his hammer, proceeded to enliven the company with a performance which had the great charm of leaving a great deal to the imagination: both the words and tune being characterised by a certain vagueness which made it possible for any gentleman or lady present to suppose that the ballad in course of delivery was his or her own especial favourite: it being as impossible to define what the song was *not* as to come to any conclusion as to what it *was*. This effort (which was extremely popular) was followed by an amiable discussion between the "chair" and a tall and obstinate person at the other end of the room, who rejoiced in the name of 'Arry, as to why he ('Arry) should not be the next to promote the enjoyment of the evening. This controversy having ended in the defeat of the chair, as far as logical argument was concerned, and another gentleman having consented to sing, in order to put an end to strife, it happened next that this last-named person had no sooner opened his mouth, than the unmanageable 'Arry, who was a species of vice-chair, and was also provided with a hammer, availed himself of that instrument to put down the volunteer gentleman, and himself began singing that very song with which he had just before been in vain entreated to "oblige." This obstinate gentleman was endowed by nature with an organ with which it was useless to attempt to contend, and bellowed away for about twenty minutes, much to the satisfaction of the audience. This done, the boys began to come forward, and some remarkable phenomena became developed. One of these young gentlemen was a touchy youth, and, leaving off if anybody made a noise, was not to be persuaded to recommence, without much apologising and administration of soothing and pacificatory compliments from the chair. There was also an undecided personage, who resembled an ill-wound musical-box, and who, getting on very tolerably through two or three verses, would then begin to run down, would wax fainter, and finally stop, and who, being wound up again, by the comfort and applause of the

public, went at it once more, performed another verse or two, and again needing and receiving stimulus, went on to the end. The vocalist who kept guard over his mouth by holding the scaling-waxed end of his pipe before his lips, as if it were a musical instrument, favoured the company at such length that your Eye-witness, leaving him, at the end of his sixth verse, to go out and breathe a little fresh air, and returning after a brisk walk of half a mile, found him still at it, and with the pipe certainly—and the song apparently—exactly where he had left it.

There was a great choice and variety of singers, who were yet in one respect all alike, and all labouring under a common difficulty—they none of them knew what to do with their eyes. It was in this, as in many other matters, that the wisdom of age was very apparent. The "chair," a gentleman somewhat advanced in years, had no sooner suspended the action of his hammer, with which he proclaimed that he was about to begin, than he closed his eyes firmly, and opened them no more until his vocal exercise had ceased. It was wonderful that this obvious way of getting out of a great difficulty did not suggest itself to any of the younger members of the company. Every other optical resource was resorted to. There was the faint vocalist who looked down at his hands while he performed, as in a retrospective calculation touching the exact period of his youth when they had last been washed; there was the loud vocalist, who "fixed" an opposite friend during his song, till the friend—it was a very long performance—actually writhed under the steadiness of the singer's glare. Then there was the gentleman who looked at the wall just over the public head: a proceeding which caused him to wear a very dreadful and sinister aspect indeed, and which threw a chill upon all the company. Lastly, there were the two great classes, or divisions, of the vocalists who looked up, and the vocalists who looked down. These last—except in the instance given above of the gentleman with the hands—would commonly direct a searching gaze into the depths of a pint-pot, or would engage to all appearance in an analytical examination of the calcined contents of an extinct tobacco-pipe. They were but a limited number, in comparison with the up-looking portion of the company, for certainly out of six vocalists the ocular refuge of five was in the stained and blackened ceiling of the concert-room.

For some time after the commencement of the musical proceedings a great degree of order was maintained. There was a long period during which not more than one gentleman sang at once, and, even after this desirable state of things could be counted upon no longer, there was still half an hour or so of comparative discipline when the president's hammer was so far respected that only two or three vocalists would be found enlivening the company with different songs at the same moment. Gradually, however, with the increased number of the guests, a corresponding increase of singers was observable, and the philanthropic desire of these gentlemen to con-

tribute to the evening's entertainment became so irrepressible, that the difficulty became at last to discover who was *not* singing. The members of the company, indeed, who were "willing to oblige," seemed not only to derive no discouragement from a consideration of the fact that several other harmonists were already in full tongue, but they even appeared to find in this circumstance an additional stimulus to greater exertion; and so one after another would add his voice to those previously in operation, and as each had a tune and words of his own, the effect was very striking indeed. Meantime the hammer of the chairman was not idle, but was busily and incessantly worked by its possessor as a restorative of order; nor was this instrument left wholly unsupported and alone. In various other parts of the room, other, and hitherto silent, hammers sprang into view, and while the chair at one end of this hall of harmony, and the vice at the other, battered away at their respective tables, the treasurer, suddenly shutting the room-door, probably to keep the sound in, began to hammer away at the panels in a workmanlike style, roaring the while to a distant friend to stand up and address the society on their disorderly conduct. The friend thus conjured, responded to the appeal, and, mounting on a bench, commenced a speech which was wholly inaudible, but which would doubtless, in spite of this circumstance, have attained to considerable length, had not the orator suddenly missed his footing, and lost himself in an abyss of pint-pots and spittoons underneath the table. It was at this time that a band of three performers, which suddenly appeared in the room, struck up a lively air; while several babies, dispersed in different quarters of the apartment, lifted up their voices in bitter but justifiable complainings.

The climax was attained; it was nearly twelve o'clock, the house had to be cleared by midnight; so the treasurer (there being no more halfpence in prospect) rose upon a table to report progress and dissolve the meeting, in a brief speech. There was a pause while this oration was delivered, but afterwards the din broke out again more furiously than before.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the treasurer—and his speech is a model on which it would be well if some diffuse orators would build their style—"beg to say—very much obliged—support—sum collected amounts to THREE POUNDS TWO SHILLINGS—thank you all round."

This announcement, which was received with much applause, was the signal for the gradual breaking up of the assembly. In the midst of all the jollification and riot, it was curious to think what it was that had brought it all about. Reminded constantly by the deep mourning band on the hat of the poor suicide's father of the real nature of this orgie, it was strange and painful to contrast the scene with the circumstance which had preceded it. To think of the girl coming home from her work, appearing a little "odd like" to her friends; of her leaving the

room, and presently returning to announce that she *HAD DONE IT*; to think of the brief interval of incredulity, the season when no one—perhaps hardly the girl herself—could realise what had happened; to think of the symptoms that told the truth too plainly, of the flight to the hospital, of the eager medical questionings, the antidotes, the remedies applied in vain; to think of the death, the inquest, the squalid funeral, but just over; to think of these things, and then to look round and note the frantic mirth of the company assembled to do honour to this Friendly Lead, and their apparent oblivion of its origin, was surely to compare and bring together two ghastly phases of human existence.

"In proportion as you descend in the social scale, the indifference to death seems to become more strongly developed," was the remark made a few days since in the writer's hearing by one of the greatest of our medical authorities. At the last of these "Leads" in Bethnal-green, before this which was attended by your Eye-witness, the proceeds of the occasion were dedicated to the use of a woman who had lost her husband. The widow herself attended the festival, and joined to such purpose in the conviviality of the meeting, that at last she jumped upon a bench to sing a song, which came to an untimely end because she was too drunk to finish it.

And yet, however occasionally grotesque and terrible in the manner of its carrying out, a "Lead" of this kind is, in the main, good in its intention and useful in its results. It is one more instance of the poor appealing to the poor, of the needy assisting the needy. The writer, sitting at his post of observation near the door of the room, felt something akin to shame, as he watched the rapid filling of the plate, as he noted the obvious poverty of those who dropped a portion of their small and hardly earned wages into it, and as the staunchness with which these poor people stick by each other forced itself more and more strongly on his attention. Not only did every person who entered the room place a contribution in the plate, not only did those who had taken the trouble to dispose of tickets among their friends arrive with the proceeds of their sale, but afterwards and throughout the evening more contributions would come in from the workmen and workwomen assembled in the room, and one among them—invariably a woman—would be sent by the others to put sixpence or a shilling in the plate. The woman would at such times be asked whom the money came from, and would answer "she didn't know, it had been given to her to bring—some of them had made it up among themselves, she supposed."

"Our web of life is of a mingled yarn, the good and ill together."

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